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"THROUGH ALL  
THE VARYING YEAR"







**"THROUGH ALL THE VARYING  
YEAR."**

*Folk say, a wisard to a northern king  
At Christmas-tide such wondrous things did shew  
That through one window men beheld the Spring,  
And through another saw the Summer glow,  
And through a third the fruited vines a-row,  
While still unheard, but in its wonted way  
Piped the drear wind of that December day.*

*WM. MORRIS.*

"THROUGH ALL THE VARYING  
YEAR."

A Calendar of Nature,

AND ANNIVERSARY BOOK OF THE SEASONS.

ARRANGED BY  
MARY JEAFFRESON.

Better for man were he and Nature  
More familiar friends.

WORDSWORTH.

All seasons shall be sweet to thee.  
COLERIDGE.

GEORGE ALLEN,  
SUNNYSIDE, ORPINGTON, KENT.  
1884.

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## PREFACE.

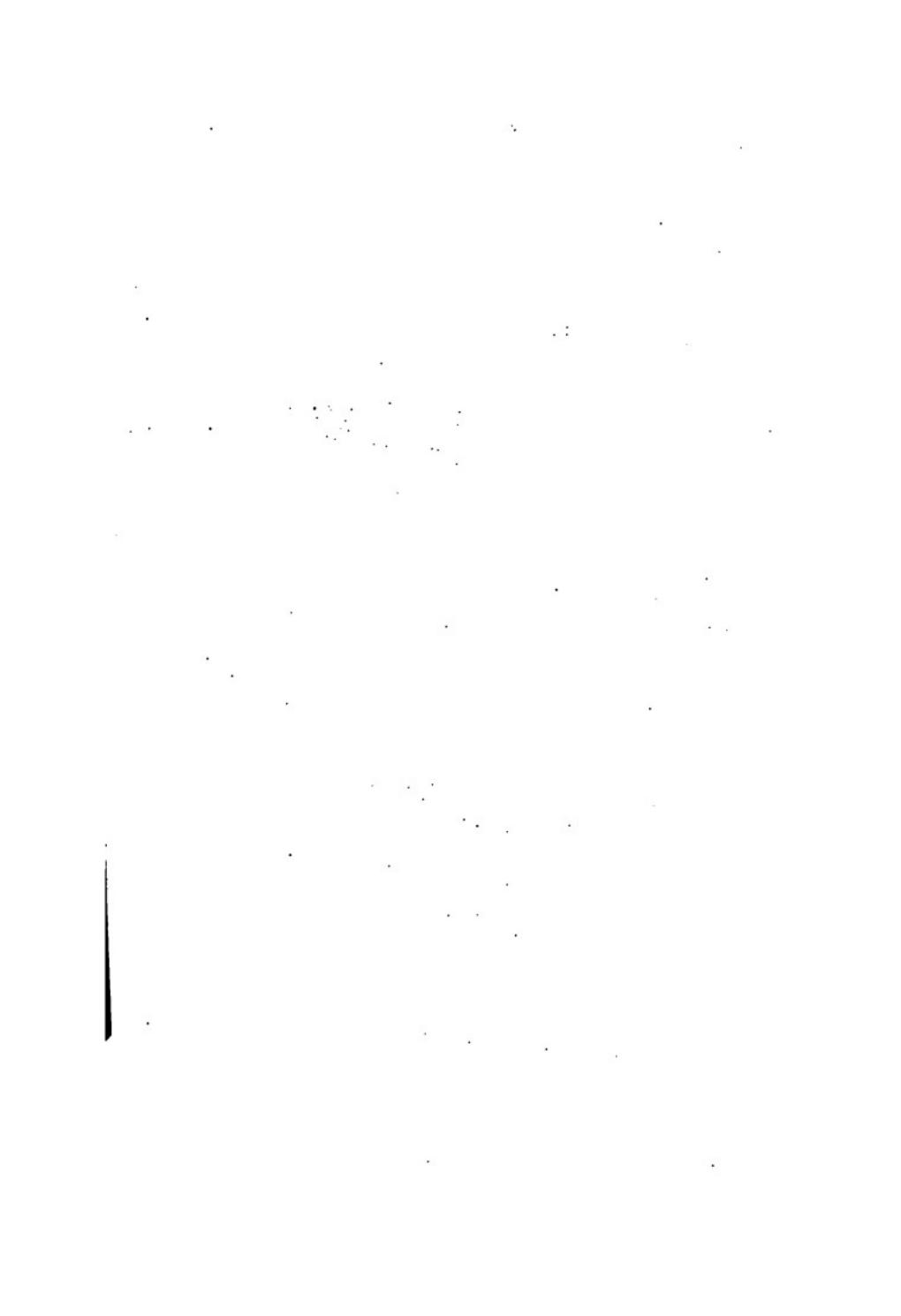
THE Editor of the Seasons' Anniversary Book tenders her very grateful thanks to all the nature-loving poets who have permitted her to make extracts from their works, and to those publishers and proprietors of copyright pieces without whose courtesy and liberality her little volume could not have presented the same combination of natural detail with loftiest poetic teaching.

Her thanks are especially due to Messrs. Bell and Sons, Messrs. Bentley and Son, Messrs. Blackwood and Sons, Messrs. Chatto and Windus, Messrs. Longmans, Green, and Co., Messrs. Macmillan and Co., Messrs. Rivington and Co., Messrs. Routledge and Co., and Messrs. Smith and Elder.

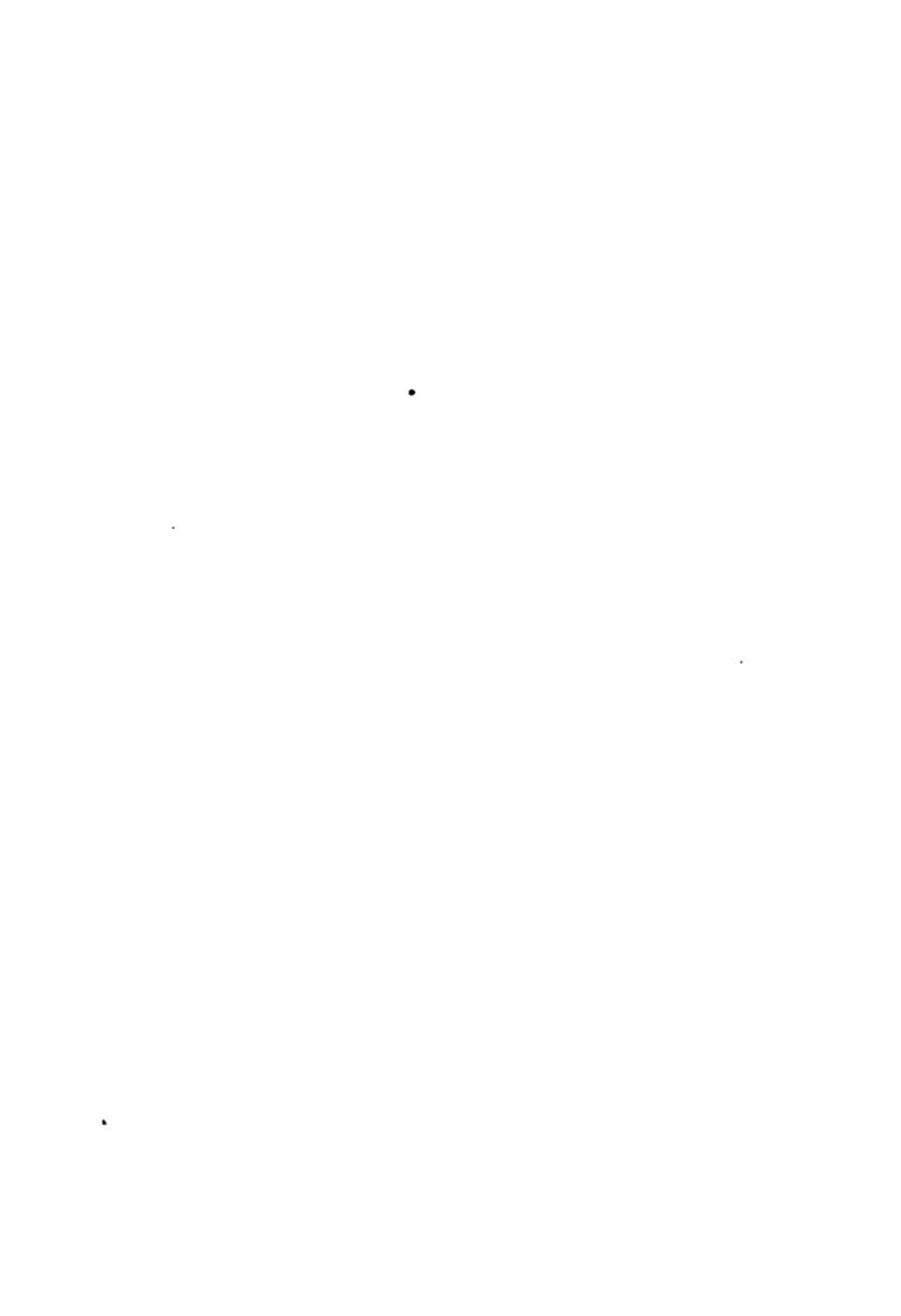
They are also very gratefully rendered to Mr. Robert Browning, Mrs. Sydney Dobell, Mr. Wm Morris, Miss Christina Rossetti, and Mrs. Augusta Webster (as well as to Lord Tennyson for a gracious permission of which circumstances have prevented her from availing herself); in short, to all who have so kindly aided her to supply a gift-book calculated to promote a loving study both of nature and of the poets who have been her best interpreters, from Chaucer's days to our own.

May it do its little part in nourishing a love of country and of beauty—beauty natural and spiritual—in the hearts of the young sons and daughters of our native land !

Of this dear English land,  
This happy England, loud with brooks and birds ;  
*Shining with harvests, cool with dewy trees,*  
*And bloom'd from hill to dell ; but whose best flowers*



**“THROUGH ALL THE VARYING  
YEAR.”**



*Old days sang round her, old memorial days,  
Voices of eld—  
The home, the church upon the village green,  
Old thoughts, that circle like the birds of Even  
Round the grey spire. Soft sweet regrets, like sunset  
Lighting old windows with gleams day had not.  
Ghosts of dead years, whispering old silent names  
Through grass-grown pathways, by halls mouldering now.  
Childhood—the fragrance of forgotten fields ;  
Manhood—the unsforgotten fields whose fragrance  
Pass'd like a breath ; the time of buttercups,  
The fluttering time of sweet forget-me-nots ;  
The time of passion and the rose.*

SYDNEY DOBELL. 1824-1874



## January.

THE first month was named by the Romans *Januarius*, after Janus, one of their deities, who was said to have two faces—one old, wrinkled, and weather-beaten, looking backward on the old year, and the other young and fresh, looking forward to the new. Among the most ancient nations—Jews, Chaldeans, and Egyptians—the *civil* year began at the autumnal equinox (answering to our 21st September), whilst their ecclesiastical year began in the Spring—a mode of reckoning followed in some parts of Italy to the present day.

The old Roman calendar also, as well as the Persian, began on the 25th March, a mode continued for many centuries by the Christian churches—and in this country, down to the year 1752,—when *the new style* of the Gregorian year was adopted.

Our Saxon ancestors named this month *Wolf Monat*, because wolves were then dangerous, and after Christianity was established they sometimes called it *Aefter-Yula*, or after Christmas. The days in January that are set apart for particular observance are *New Year's day*, and *Epiphany* or *Twelfth day* (Old Christmas day). The Monday following Twelfth day is called *Plough Monday*.

Such of the wild animals as do not hibernate feel the cold so much as to become familiar. Foxes, polecats, and weasels make incursions on hen-roosts ; hares, emboldened by hunger, visit our kitchen gardens ; larks seek shelter in the warm stubble ; thrushes, blackbirds, and fieldfares cower under the hedges, while sparrows and chaffinches come in the wake of the friendly robin to pick up crumbs at our doors. Vast numbers of waterfowl also visit our shores from more northern coasts. During the early part of the month vegetation seems to be at a standstill, but groundsel, red dead-nettle, and mezereon appear toward its close, and the large buds of the sycamore and horse chestnut are covered with a coat of varnish, impenetrable till the sunshine of Spring shall soften it and allow them to expand.

*It is a season of privation for the poor, and of private benevolence on the part of the rich—as well as of domestic enjoyment, and festive and friendly gatherings.*

## January 1.

*New Year's day. Feast of Circumcision.*

Blasts of January  
Would blow you through and through.  
SHAKSPERE. *Winter's Tale*, Act iv. Sc. 4.  
1564-1616

Heap on more wood!—the wind is chill;  
But let it whistle as it will,  
We'll keep our Christmas merry still.  
Each age has deem'd the new-born year  
The fittest time for festal cheer.

SIR WALTER SCOTT. 1771-1832

## January 2.

*Indoor pleasures invite. Thrush sings.*

Tow'red cities please us then,  
And the busy hum of men,  
Where throngs of knights and barons bold,  
In weeds of peace high triumphs hold,  
With store of ladies whose bright eyes  
Rain influence, and judge the prize  
Of wit or arms, while both contend  
To win her grace whom all commend.

MILTON. 1608-1674

## January 3.

*Carol-singing continues.*

The minstrels play'd their Christmas tune  
To-night beneath my cottage eaves;  
While smitten by a lofty moon  
The encircling laurels, thick with leaves,  
Gave back a rich and dazzling sheen,  
That overpower'd their natural green.  
Through hill and valley, every breeze  
Had sunk to rest with folded wings:  
Keen was the air, but could not freeze  
Nor check the music of the strings,  
*So stout and hardy were the band*  
*That scraped the chords with strenuous hand.*  
WORDSWORTH. 1770-1850

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## January 4.

*Larks seek shelter in the stubble.*

When icicles hang by the wall,  
And Dick the shepherd blows his nail,  
And Tom bears logs into the hall,  
And milk comes frozen home in pail :  
When blood is nipt, and ways be foul.

SHAKSPERE. 1564-1616

Go seek, when winter snows discomfort bring,  
The counter-spirit found in some gay church,  
Green with fresh holly, every pew a perch  
In which the linnet or the lark might sing.

WORDSWORTH. 1770-1850

## January 5.

*The Winter Aconite in bloom. (New Year's Gift.)*

God hath made it, fed it, train'd it  
Into beauty, and maintain'd it,  
For thy joy and solace, man ;  
Can such Guardian be forgetful  
Of the selfish, sinful, fretful  
Human portion of his plan ?

J. C. PRINCE.

Bright gems of earth, by which we see,  
What Eden was, what Paradise will be.

## January 6.

*Old Christmas day. Twelfth day. Feast of Epiphany.*

My heart for very joy doth leap,  
My lips no more can silence keep ;  
Glory to God in highest heaven,  
Who unto man His Son hath given !  
While angels sing, with holy mirth,  
A glad new year to all the earth.

LUTHER. *Carol for his little son Hans,*  
A.D. 1540. 1483-1546

*A lusty winter, frosty but kindly.*

SHAKSPERE. *As You Like It, Act ii. Sc. 3.*  
1564-1616

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## January 7.

*Chickweed in flower.*

Look on that chickweed, mourner, and list the grateful strain  
Of robin, singing praises 'mid driving wind and rain,  
That warbling creature hath not, nor fields nor hoarded corn,  
And yet she sweetly singeth 'mid leafless boughs at morn,  
Her cheerful voice proclaiming from out the lonely tree  
That He who feeds the lone one will surely care for thee.  
O learn her lore, poor mourner ! The storm shall pass away ;  
For all, sweet spring is coming, for thee, a brighter day.

ANON.

## January 8.

*Northern lights may be looked for.*

Oft in this season, silent from the north  
A blaze of meteors starts, ensweeping first  
The lower skies, they all at once converge  
High to the crown of heaven, and all at once  
Relapsing quick, as quickly reascend  
And mix, and thwart, extinguish, and renew  
All ether coursing in a maze of light.

THOMSON. 1700-1748

Through the sharp hawthorn blows the cold north wind.

SHAKSPERE. *King Lear.* Act iii. Sc. 4.

1564-1616

## January 9.

*Rosemary flourishes (formerly used at funerals).*

Sweet scented flower ! Thou'rt wont to bloom  
On January's front severe,  
And o'er the wintry desert drear  
To waft thy faint perfume !  
Come, thou shalt form my nosegay now,  
And I will bind thee round my brow.

HENRY KIRKE WHITE. 1785-1806

*There's rosemary, that's for remembrance.*

SHAKSPERE. *Hamlet,* Act iv. Sc. 5.

1564-1616

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## January 10.

*Fieldsares flock, in search of hawthorn and holly berries.*

The wintry hedge was black,  
The green grass was not seen,  
    The birds did rest  
        On the bare thorn's breast,  
Whose roots, beside the pathway track  
Had bound their folds o'er many a crack  
Which the frost had made between.

P. B. SHELLEY. 1792-1822

As days lengthen, cold will strengthen.

*Folk-Lore.*

O ye Ice and Snow, bless ye the Lord :  
Praise Him and magnify Him forever.

*Song of the Three Children.*

## January 11.

*The fireside attracts.*

O Winter, ruler of the inverted year,  
Thy scatter'd hair with sleet like ashes fill'd,  
The breath congeal'd upon thy lips, thy cheeks  
Fringed with a beard, made white with other snows  
Than those of age, thy forehead wrapt in clouds,  
A withered branch thy sceptre—I love thee,  
And crown thee king of intimate delights,  
Fireside enjoyments, homeborn happiness.

COWPER. 1731-1800

## January 12.

*Social intercourse prevails*

Where glowing embers through the room  
Teach light to counterfeit a gloom.

MILTON. *Il Penseroso.* 1608-1674

Enjoy your dear wit, and gay rhetoric  
That hath so well been taught her dazzling fence.

Ibid. *Comus.*

*For eloquence the soul, song charms the sense.*  
Ibid. *Paradise Lost.*

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## January 13.

*Hilary Term begins.*

Down fell the snow, and fell three days and nights,  
Then ceased. The ground was white, an ankle-deep ;  
The window of the school was threaded o'er  
With hueless flowers of ice. Frost's unseen hands  
Prick'd you, from head to foot, with tingling heat.  
The shouting urchins, yonder on the green,  
Play'd snowballs.

ROBERT BUCHANAN.

## January 14.

*Ponds and rivers frozen over.*

Dead stream, beneath the icy silent blocks  
That motionless stand soddening into grime,  
Thy fretted falls hang numb, frost pens thy locks,  
Dead river, when shall be thy waking-time ?  
“ Not dead,” the river spoke, and answer’d me,  
“ My burden’d current, hidden, finds the sea.”  
“ Not dead, not dead,” my heart replied at length,  
“ The frozen river holds a hidden strength.”

AUGUSTA WEBSTER.

## January 15.

*Crickets chirp about the stoves.*

Little inmate, full of mirth,  
Chirping on my Christmas hearth,  
Thou surpassest, happier far,  
Happiest grasshoppers that are.  
Theirs is but a summer’s song,  
Thine endures the winter long,  
Unimpair’d, and shrill, and clear,  
*Melody throughout the year.*

COWPER. *Translated from VINCENT BOURNE.*  
1731-1800 1696-1747.

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## January 16.

*Severe Weather. Frogs take refuge in the mud under lakes and pools.*

It was a winter such as when birds die  
In the deep forests ; and the fishes lie  
Stiffen'd in the translucent ice, which makes  
Even the mud and slime of the warm lakes  
A wrinkled clod, as hard as brick ; and when,  
Among their children, comfortable men  
Gather about great fires, and yet feel cold :  
Alas ! then for the homeless beggar old.

SHELLEY. 1792-1822

## January 17.

*Sparrows chirp at the window-sill.*

The new-laid snowy carpet, ankle-deep,  
Crumbles beneath my footsteps as I pass,  
Revealing scanty blades of frozen grass.  
On either side the chirping sparrows leap  
And here and there a robin, friendly now,  
From naked bough to bough.

BUCHANAN.

He giveth snow like wool.

*Psalms of David, cxlvii. 16.*

## January 18.

*Snow buntings flock.*

How dazzling white the snowy scene ! deep,  
Deep the stillness of the winter's Sabbath day,  
Not even a footfall heard. Smooth are the fields,  
Each hollow pathway level with the plain :  
Hid are the bushes, save that here and there  
Are seen the topmost shoots of brier and broom.

GRAHAME. 1765-1811

*The frost performs its secret ministry,  
Unhelp'd by any wind.*

COLERIDGE. 1772-1834

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### January 19.

*North wind prevails.*

How the keen frost and raging wind endear  
The silence and the warmth enjoy'd within !  
Not undelightful is an hour to me  
That's spent in parlour-twilight : such a gloom  
Suits or the thoughtful or unthinking mind.  
Me oft has fancy, ludicrous and wild,  
Sooth'd with a waking dream of sights express'd  
In the red cinders, while with poring eye  
I gazed, myself creating what I saw.

COWPER. 1731-1800

### January 20.

*Frost continues. Stars shine out brilliantly in the deep blue sky.*

Most pitiless and stark the winter grew  
Meanwhile, beneath a sky of cloudless blue,  
And sun that warm'd not ; till they nigh forgot  
The green lush spring, the summer rich and hot,  
The autumn fragrant with slow ripening fruit.

WM. MORRIS.

Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky,  
Thou dost not bite so nigh  
As benefits forgot ;  
Though thou the waters warp,  
Thy sting is not so sharp  
As friend remember'd not.

SHAKSPERE. *As You Like It*, Act ii. Sc. 7.  
1564-1616

### January 21.

*St. Agnes' day.*

Healthy and rosy, fresh from slumber sweet—  
A sunbeam in the quiet morning street,  
All winter long, witless who peep'd the while,  
She sweeten'd the chill mornings with her smile.  
*When the soft snow was falling, dimly white,*  
*Shining among it with a child's delight,*  
*Bright as a rose, though nipping winds might blow,*  
*And leaving fairy footprints in the snow.*

ROBT. BUCHANAN.

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## January 22.

*St. Vincent's day.*

### PLEASURES OF SKATING.

In the frosty season, when the sun  
Was set, and visible for many a mile  
The cottage windows blazed, all shod with steel,  
We hiss'd along the polish'd ice in games  
Confederate, imitative of the chase  
And woodland pleasures—while the stars  
Eastward were sparkling clear, and in the west  
The orange sky of evening died away.

WORDSWORTH. 1770-1850

## January 23.

*The skylark may be heard.*

Oft with patient ear,  
Long-listening to the viewless skylark's note  
(Viewless, or haply for a moment seen  
Gleaming on sunny wings), in whisper'd tones  
I've said to my belovèd, "Such, sweet girl,  
The inobtrusive song of happiness,  
Unearthly minstrelsy ! then only heard  
When the soul seeks to hear ; when all is hush'd  
And the heart listens."

COLERIDGE. 1772-1834

## January 24.

*The wren sings in sheltered places.*

Welcome to your hearth,  
The redbreast, ruffled up by winter's cold  
Into a feathery bunch, feeds at your hand.  
A box perchance is from your casement hung  
For the small wren to build in.

WORDSWORTH. 1770-1850

*Wonderful indeed are all His works,*  
*Pleasant to know, and worthiest to be all*  
*Had in remembrance, always with delight.*

MILTON. 1608-1674

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## January 25.

CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL.

*The Holly Tree.*

The eye that contemplates it well, perceives  
    Its glossy leaves  
Order'd by an intelligence so wise  
As might confound the atheist's sophistries.  
Below,—a circling fence,—its leaves are seen  
    Wrinkled and keen ;  
But as they grow where nothing is to fear,  
Smooth and unarmed the pointless leaves appear.

SOUTHEY. 1774-1843

## January 26.

*Thrushes sing in the yew-trees.*

I love those yew-tree trunks, where stand array'd  
So many deep-cut names of youth and maid.  
A simple custom this—I love it well—  
A carved betrothal and a pledge of truth.  
How many an eve, their linkèd names to spell,  
Beneath these yew-trees sat our village youth !  
When work was over, and the new-cut hay  
Sent wafts of balm from meadows where it lay.

JEAN INGELOW.

## January 27.

*Sledging. Thrushes clamour round the hollies.*

'Tis a brave tree. While round its boughs in vain  
    The warring wind of January bites and girds,  
It holds the clusters of its ripening grain,  
    A winter pasture for the shivering birds.  
O patient Holly, that the children love,  
No need for thee of smooth blue skies above :  
O green, strong Holly, shine amid the frost ;  
Thou dost not lose one leaf for sunshine lost.

AUGUSTA WEBSTER.

*Marcus, we are but shrubs ; no cedars we.*

SHAKSPERE. *Titus Andronicus, Act iv. Sc.*  
1564-1616

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## January 28.

*Silence in the woods.*

He giveth snow like wool.

*Psalms of David, cxlvii. 16.*

The woods were in their winter sleep,  
And dreaming, some of Autumn past,  
And some of Spring approaching fast,  
And some of April buds and showers,  
And some of songs in July bowers,  
And all of love.

P. B. SHELLEY. 1792-1822

## January 29.

*Waterfowl abundant.*

They bode there, longing for the Spring,  
Until a south-west gale blew o'er the snow,  
And northward drove the steel-blue clouds and low.  
And on that night the patterning of the rain  
Roused them from sleep, and next they saw the plain  
Made grey and ugly with quick-coming thaw,  
And all the sky beset with fowl they saw,  
Who sniff'd the wind and hasten'd from the sea,  
Unto the floods now coming certainly.

WM. MORRIS.

## January 30.

*Earth-worms at work.*

It suffices. What suffices?

All suffices, reckon'd rightly.

Spring shall bloom where now the ice is,  
Roses make the bramble slightly,  
And the quickening sun shine brightly,  
And the latter wind blow lightly,  
*And my garden teem with spices.*

CHRISTINA ROSETTI.

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## January 31.

*The redbreast sings.*

The bird whom man loves best,  
The pious bird with scarlet breast,  
Our little English robin.

WM. WORDSWORTH. 1770-185

All seasons shall be sweet to thee,  
Whether the summer clothe the genial earth  
With greenness, or the redbreast sit and sing  
Betwixt the tufts of snow on the bare branch  
Of mossy apple-tree, while the nigh thatch  
Smokes in the sun-thaw ; whether the eave-drops fal  
Heard only in the trances of the blast,  
Or if the secret ministry of frost  
Shall hang them up in silent icicles,  
Quietly shining to the quiet moon.

COLERIDGE. 1772-1834

The time will bring on summer,  
When briars shall have leaves as well as thorns,  
And be as sweet as sharp.

SHAKSPERE. *All's Well that Ends Well*, Act iv. Sc  
1564-1616

### *Leafless Daphne buds.*

It was frosty Winter's season,  
And fair Flora's wealth was geason.\*  
Meads that erst with green were spread  
With choice flowers diaperèd,  
Had tawny veils ; cold and scanted.—  
Leafless boughs you there might see,  
All, except fair Daphne's tree.

ROBIN GREEN. 1560-1592.

\* rare.

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## *SILENCE IN THE WINTER WOODS.*

*How calm it was!—The silence there  
By such a chain was bound,  
That even the busy woodpecker  
Made stiller with her sound  
The inviolable quietness;  
The breath of peace we drew  
With its soft motion made not less  
The calm that round us grew.  
There seem'd, from the remotest seat  
Of the white mountain-waste,  
To the soft flower beneath our feet  
A magic circle traced,—  
A spirit interfused around  
A thrilling silent life:  
To momentary peace it bound  
Our mortal nature's strife.  
And still, I felt, the centre of  
The magic circle there,  
Was one fair form that fill'd with love  
The lifeless atmosphere.*

*SHELLEY.*

*Written February 2nd, 1822.*



## February.

THIS second month of the year was named by the Romans *Februarius*, and dedicated to the goddess *Februa*, who was supposed to preside over cleansing, and also placed under the special protection of Neptune, the god of the waters.

The Saxons called it *Sprout-Kele*, because cabbages began to sprout, but afterwards *Sol-Monat* or Sun-Month, because of the increasing power of the sun shown in thawing the ice and causing plants to vegetate.

The days specially observed during February are the 2nd, called *Candlemas day*, or the *Feast of the Purification* or of *Christ's Presentation*; the 3rd, a great day among wool-combers, in honour of their patron, *St. Blaise*, who is said to have discovered the art of wool-combing; the 14th, the *Feast of St. Valentine*, a Bishop of Rome martyred under Valerian, which has many social customs observed on it, that have come down to us from the Roman festival of *Lupercalia*, previously observed on the same day. The *Lent* or *Spring* fast takes place at this season, preceded by *Shrove Tuesday*—the Tuesday following the first Sunday before Lent—when our forefathers attended confession. The first day of Lent is called *Ash Wednesday*, because the faithful formerly sprinkled their heads with ashes on that day in token of penitence and humility. Lent continues forty days, and was appointed for the special commemoration of the temptation, sufferings, and death of the Redeemer.

February is often attended by rapid thaws, which show us once more the face of the country in spite of the fogs and mists which obscure it. Rooks begin to clamour, the raven to build, the goose to lay, and the woodlark to cheer us by her sweet song. The sap begins to rise in trees and shrubs, buds to swell, hibernating insects to reappear, and in the middle of the month birds to pair. The snowdrop, “fair maid of February,” appears in our gardens, soon followed by the “cloth of gold” crocus. The catkins of the sallow begin to be visible, and those of the hazel abound. The farmer is busy *turning over the fallows*, draining his wet lands, dressing his fences, *pruning trees*, planting young ones, and, if possible, *sowing peas, beans, and spring corn*.

## February 1.

*Snowdrops appear. "Icicle Flower."*

One month is past, another is begun,  
Since merry bells rang out the dying year,  
And buds of rarest green begin to peer  
As if impatient for a warmer sun ;  
And, though the distant hills are bleak and dun,  
The virgin snowdrop, like a lambent fire,  
Pierces the cold earth with its green-streak'd spire.

HARTLEY COLERIDGE. 1796-1849

## February 2.

*Candlemas Day.*

Down with the Rosemary and Bayes—  
Down with the Mistletoe—  
Instead of Holly, now upraise  
The greener Box for show :  
The Holly hitherto did sway,  
Let Box now domineer,  
Until the joyous Easter-day  
Or Easter-Eve appear.

HERRICK. From "Hesperides."  
1591-1674

## February 3.

*Alternations of frost and thaw.*

And were it for thy profit to obtain  
All sunshine? no vicissitude of rain?  
Think'st thou that thy laborious plough requires  
Not winter frosts as well as summer fires?  
There must be both. Sometimes these hearts of ours  
Must have the sweet, the seasonable showers  
Of tears : sometimes the frost of chill despaire  
Makes our desirèd sunshine seem more faire;  
*Weathers that most oppose to flesh and blood*  
*Are such as help to make our harvests good.*

QUARLES. 1592-1654

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## February 4.

*Hedges bud.*

An envious sneaping frost  
That bites the first-born infants of the Spring.  
SHAKSPERE. *Love's Labour's Lost*, Act i. §  
1564-1616

A February face  
So full of frost, of storm and cloudiness.  
Ibid. *Much Ado About Not.*  
Act v. Sc. 4.

## February 5.

*Blue Titmouse chirps. Snow gradually disappears.*

Hark ! the Hours are softly calling,  
Bidding Spring arise,  
To listen to the raindrops falling  
From the cloudy skies.  
'Tis she must clear the snow that lingers  
Round their stalks away,  
And let the snowdrops' trembling whiteness  
See the light of day.  
A. A. PROCTER. 1835-1862

## February 6.

*Autumn-sown seeds germinate.*

The sun's hot rays will soon unloose  
Pale Winter's frozen grasp,  
New life in Nature soon induce  
The warm air's circling clasp.  
But what reviving summer breath  
Shall thaw thy icy hand, O Death ?  
What ! shall the faithful God, Who leads  
The long-revolving year,  
Who in his bosom warms the seeds,  
And breathes on Nature's bier,  
*Leave seeds divine of souls immortal*  
*To freeze unloved in Death's cold portal.*  
W. C. ROSCOE. 1753-18

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## February 7.

*Catkins of the willow appear.*

See the soft green willow springing  
Where the waters gently pass,  
Every way her free arms flinging  
O'er the moist and reedy grass.  
Long ere winter blasts are fled  
See her tipp'd with vernal red,  
And her kindly flower display'd,  
Ere her leaf can cast a shade.

KEBLE. 1792-1856

## February 8.

*Daisies appear.*

Daisies, those pearl'd Arcturi of the earth,  
The constellated flower that never sets.

SHELLEY. 1792-1822

Of all the floures in the mede,  
Than love I most the floures white and rede  
Soch that men callen daisies in our toun.

CHAUCER. 1328-1400

## February 9.

*Watercresses sprout in running brooks.*

Lord, Thou hast given me a cell  
Wherein to dwell ;  
A little house whose humble roof  
Is weather-proof,  
Under the spars of which I lie  
Both soft and dry.  
Lord, I confess too, when I dine  
The pulse is thine,  
And all those other bits that be  
There placed by Thee,  
The wurts, the purslane, and the mess  
Of watercress.

HERRICK. 1591-1674

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## February 10.

*Land ready for the plough.*

While yet the spring is young, while earth unbinds  
Her frozen bosom to the western winds ;  
While mountain snows dissolve against the sun,  
And streams yet new from precipices run ;  
E'en in this early dawning of the year  
Produce the plough, and yoke the sturdy steer.

*The Georgics of Virgil.* B.C. 70-19

He sendeth out His word and melteth them,  
He bloweth with His wind and the waters flow.

*Psalms of David, cxlvii. 18*

## February 11.

*Ice disappears rapidly.*

The snow has left the cottage-top,  
The thatch-moss takes a brighter green,  
And eaves in quick succession drop  
Where bristling icicles have been ;  
Pit-patting with a pleasant noise  
In tubs set by the cottage-door,  
While ducks and geese—embodied joys—  
Plunge in the pond now brimming o'er.

CLARE. *The Shepherd's Calendar*  
1793-1864

## February 12.

*Evergreens in full beauty.*

If now the sun extend his cheering beam,  
And o'er the landscape cast a golden gleam,  
Clear is the sky and soft and calm the air,  
And through thin mist each object looks more fair.  
Then where the villa rears its sheltering grove  
Along the southern lawn 'tis sweet to rove ;  
There dark green pines, behind, their boughs extend,  
And bright spruce-firs like pyramids ascend :  
*Around their tops in many a pendent row*  
*Their scaly cones of shining auburn show.*

FORSTER.

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## February 13.

*Sunshine becomes more frequent. Yew-tree flowers.*

Those sweet, sweet patches of delight  
That visit our bedarken'd day,  
Like passage-birds, with hasty flight,—  
It cannot be they perish quite,  
Although they pass away.

They come and go—they seem to say  
That far beyond this vale of woes  
There is a region of repose  
For those who pass away.

HARTLEY COLERIDGE. 1796-1849

## February 14.

*S. Valentine's Day. (The Roman Lupercalia.)*

I wonder if the sap is stirring yet,  
If wintry birds are dreaming of a mate,  
If frozen snowdrops feel as yet the sun,  
And crocus fires are kindling one by one?  
Sing, Robin, sing!

I still am sore in doubt concerning Spring.

CHRISTINA ROSETTI.

## February 15.

*Coltsfoot flowers.*

### A FORETASTE OF SPRING.

The brightest hour of unborn Spring,  
Through the winter wandering,  
Found, it seems, the halcyon morn,  
To hoar February born ;—  
—It smiled upon the silent sea,  
And bade the frozen streams be free ;  
It waked to music all their fountains,  
It breathed upon the frozen mountains,  
*And like a prophetess of May,*  
*Strew'd flowers upon the barren way.*

P. B. SHELLEY. 1792-1822

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## February 16.

*Fruit-trees are pruned.*

We, at this time of year,  
Do wound the bark, the skin of our fruit-trees ;  
Lest, being overproud in sap and blood,  
With too much riches it confound itself.

SHAKSPERE. *King Richard I.*  
Act iii. Sc. 4. 1564-1616

Every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth, that it may  
bring forth more fruit. *John xv. 2. New Testame*

## February 17.

*The lesser Celandine flowers. (Common Pilewort.)*

Ere a leaf is on the bush,  
In the time before the thrush  
Has a thought about its nest,  
Thou wilt come with half a call,  
Spreading out thy glossy breast,  
Like a careless prodigal—  
Telling tales about the sun  
When we've little warmth or none.

Wm. WORDSWORTH. 1770-1850

## February 18.

*Primroses hide in the hedgerows.*

The drift is in the hollows of the hill,  
Yet primrose-leaves uncurl beneath the hedge ;  
Frosts pierce the dawn, and the northwind blows chill,  
Yet snowdrop spikelets rim the garden edge.  
Dear plants, that will make bud in coming spring,  
Ye were not for one only blossoming ;  
*More than one* blossoming for all fair flowers ;—  
*And God keeps mine till Spring is somewhere ours.*

AUGUSTA WEBSTER.

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### February 19.

*Blackbirds whistle. Daisies bloom.*  
For Nature's charms, the hills and woods,  
The sweeping vales, and foaming floods,  
Are free alike to all.—  
In days when daisies deck the sod,  
And blackbirds whistle clear,  
Wi' honest joy our hearts will bound  
To greet the coming year.

BURNS. 1759-1796

### February 20.

*Yellow (Cloth of Gold) Crocus may be found.*  
Soon o'er their heads blithe April airs shall sing,  
A thousand wild-flowers round them shall unfold,  
The green buds glisten in the dews of Spring,  
And all be vernal rapture as of old.

J. KEBLE. 1792-1856

Waiting for Spring ! The hearts of men are watching,  
Each for some brighter, better, fairer thing.  
Each ear a distant sound most sweet is catching,—  
A herald of the beauty of the Spring.

C. F. ALEXANDER.

### February 21.

*Common nettle in flower.*

Yes,—there are nettles everywhere—  
But smooth green grasses are more common still,  
The blue of heaven is larger than the cloud.

E. B. BROWNING. 1809-1861

The sunbeams on the hedges lie,  
The south wind murmurs, summer-soft ;  
The maids hang out white clothes to dry,  
Around the elder-skirted croft :  
A calm of pleasure broods around,  
And almost whispers winter by ;  
While fancy dreams of summer's sound,  
*And quiet rapture fills the eye.*

CLARE. 1793-1864

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## February 22.

*Bees begin to stir.*

All Nature seems at work. Slugs leave their lair :  
The bees are stirring—birds are on the wing,  
And Winter, slumbering in the open air,  
Wears on his smiling face a dream of Spring.

COLERIDGE. 1772-1834

## February 23.

*Spring corn may be sown.*

Is thy curse of comfort failing, rise and share it with another,  
And through all the years of famine it shall serve thee and  
thy brother ;

Love Divine will fill the storehouse, and thy handful still renew ;  
Scanty fare for one, will often make a royal feast for two.  
For the heart grows rich in giving, all its wealth is living grain ;  
Seeds which mildew in the garner, scatter'd, fill with gold  
the plain.

MRS. CHARLES.

They considered not the miracle of the loaves.

*Mark vi. 52. New Testament.*

## February 24.

*St. Matthias' Day.*

Who going through the vale of misery use it for a well ;  
the pools are filled with water. *Psalms of David.*

We paused beside the pools that lie  
Under the forest-bough.  
Each seem'd as 'twere a little sky  
Gulf'd in a world below :  
A firmament of purple light  
Which in the dark earth lay,  
More boundless than the depth of night  
And purer than the day—  
In which the lovely forests grew  
As in the upper air,  
*More perfect both in shape and hue*  
*Than any spreading there.*

SHELLEY.

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## February 25.

*Mountain-yew in blossom.*

Nor curious less the mountain yew,  
Which, mid its leaves of solemn hue,  
Its sulphur-coloured anthers now  
In clusters on the dark-green bough,  
Here void of cup or blossom fair,  
Exhibits ; and, at distance, there  
Its verdant chalices minute,  
The embryos of its scarlet fruit.

BP. MANT. 1776-1848

## February 26.

*Rooks are building.*

Here lofty elms and venerable oaks  
Invite the rook, who high amid their boughs  
In early Spring his airy city builds,  
And ceaseless caws amuse.

THOMSON. 1699-1748

See the rooks with busy claw  
Foraging for sticks and straw.

KEATS. 1796-1821

And to the toils of nature true  
Wreath their capacious nests anew.

THOMAS WARTON. 1728-1790

## February 27.

*The leaves of the "Herb Robert" turn crimson.*

"Poor Robin" is yet flowerless ; but how gay  
With his red stalks upon this sunny day !  
His tufts of leaflets shine, not lacking power  
To rival Summer's brightest scarlet flower.  
And flowers they well might seem to passers-by  
*If look'd at only with a careless eye :*

*Flowers—or a richer produce—did it suit*  
*The season—sprinklings of ripe strawberry fruit.*

WORDSWORTH. 1770-1850

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## February 28.

*Young lambs adorn the pastures.*

Now new-born lambs require the shepherd's care ;  
Lambs—at whose birth the powerful instinct's seen  
That fills with champions the daisied green ;—  
For ewes, that stood aloof with timid eye,  
With stamping foot now men and dogs defy,  
And, obstinately faithful to their young,  
Guard their first steps to join the bleating throng.

ROBT. BLOOMFIELD. 1766-1823

## February 29.

*Spring floods occur.*

They beheld

How the swift river from the high ground swell'd,  
And still tormented by the wind and rain,  
Burst from the ice and cover'd all the plain  
With breadth of turbid waters, while around  
Their high-raised camp again they saw the ground  
Freed from the swathing snow ; nor was it long  
Ere in the woods the birds began their song,  
For March was come and life to every thing,  
Nor did the buds fear much the doubtful spring.

WM. MORRIS.

The current that with gentle murmur glides,  
Thou knowest being stopp'd impatiently doth rage ;  
But when his fair course is not hinder'd  
He makes sweet music with th' enamell'd stones ;  
Giving a gentle kiss to every sedge  
He overtaketh in his pilgrimage.

SHAKSPERE. *Two Gentlemen of Verona.*  
Act ii. Sc. 7. 1564-1616

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**E**



*VERSE MARCHES WITH THE YEAR FROM  
SPRING TO AUTUMN.*

*I will begin . . .*  
*Now while the early budders just are new*  
*And run in mazes of the youngest hue*  
*About old forests ; while the willow trails*  
*Its delicate amber ; and the dairy pails*  
*Bring home increase of milk. And as the year*  
*Grows lush in juicy stalks, I'll smoothly steer*  
*My little boat, for many quiet hours,*  
*With streams that deepen freshly into bowers.*  
*Many and many a verse I hope to write*  
*Before the daisies, vermeil rimm'd and white,*  
*Hide in deep herbage ; and ere yet the bees*  
*Hum about globes of clover and sweet peas*  
*I must be near the middle of my story.*  
*O may no wintry season, bare and hoary,*  
*See it half-finish'd ; but let Autumn bold,*  
*With universal tinge of sober gold*  
*Be all about me when I make an end.*

*KEATS.*



## March.

*Martius*, or March, the first month of the year in the oldest Roman Calendar, became the third month under Numa. Our Saxon ancestors called it *Rhede Monath*, or the rugged month, on account of the generally stormy and boisterous character of its equinoctial gales. Afterwards, they called it *Lenet-Monath* because of the lengthening days. The Vernal Equinox, when day and night are equal, takes place on the 21st of March. The days specially observed in March are the 1st, *St. David's day*, which the Welsh keep in honour of their first Apostle, wearing leeks in their hats, in commemoration, it is said, of a victory they gained over the Saxons, when they wore leeks as their badge ;—the 17th, *St. Patrick's day*, when Irishmen wear the trefoil or shamrock, a leaf of which he is said to have used in explaining the doctrine of the Trinity to their ancestors ; the 25th is observed throughout Christendom as *The Feast of the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary*. It is generally called *Lady-day*, and being the first *Quarter-day* is one of great importance in business.

In this month east winds prevail, which dry the soil for ploughing and sowing, and preserve the seeds already in the ground from rotting. It is a stirring period with our native birds, who having paired and made ready to build, are full of song, while the winter birds of passage leave us for their summer haunts. Ringdoves coo, pheasants cackle, and domestic fowls are already sitting on their eggs. The sulphur butterfly appears on some sunny day and gnats are abundant. Rooks may be seen feeding in great numbers on the insects turned up by the plough, and foraging material for their nests. Many spring flowers appear, notably the vernal crocus, which opens its flowers by the beginning of March at latest, even in very rigorous weather ; indeed, can be with difficulty retarded ; although the autumnal crocus defies all the sweet influences of spring and summer, not blooming till other plants are seeding. *Gardeners are busy digging, weeding, pruning, and seed-sowing.*

### March 1.

*St. David's day.*

Slayer of Winter, art thou here again ?  
O welcome, thou that bringest Summer nigh !  
The bitter wind makes not thy victory vain.  
Welcome, O March ! whose kindly days and dry  
Make April ready for the throstle's song !  
Thou first redresser of the winter's wrong !

W.M. MORRIS.

### March 2.

*St. Chad's day. (Early Lent-lily blooms.)*

TO KEEP TRUE LENT.

Is this a fast?—To keep	No—'tis to fast from strife,
The larder lean	From old debate
And clean	And hate :
From fat of veales and sheep?	To circumcise thy life.
Is it to fast an houre?	To show a heart grief-rent,
Or ragged go?	To starve thy sin,
Or show	Not bin ;
A downcast look and soure?	And that's to keep true Lent.
Is this true Lent?	

HERRICK. 1591-1674.

### March 3.

*Weeding-time.*

Now 'tis the Spring, and weeds are shallow-rooted ;  
Suffer them now, and they'll outgrow the garden,  
And choke the herbs for lack of husbandry.

SHAKSPERE. *All's Well that Ends Well,*  
Act ii. Sc. 3.

The canker galls the infants of the Spring,  
Too oft before their buttons be disclosed ;  
And in the morn and liquid dew of youth  
Contagious blastments are most imminent.

*Be wary then : best safety lies in fear.*

SHAKSPERE. *Hamlet, Act i. Sc. 3.*  
1564-1616

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### March 4.

*Purple Ground Ivy in flower.*

In each hedgerow Spring must hasten  
Cowslips sweet to set,  
Primroses in rich profusion  
With bright dew-drops wet,  
And beneath each leaf, in shadow  
Hide a violet !  
Every tree within the forest  
Must be deck'd anew,  
And the tender buds of promise  
Should be peeping through.

A. A. PROCTER. 1835-1864

### March 5.

*Early Spring flowers adorn the pastures.*  
The rathe primrose that forsaken dies.

MILTON. *Lycidas.* 1608-1674

Primrose, firstborn child of Ver,\*  
Merry spring-time's harbinger.

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER. 1586-1616  
1576-1625

With Spring's delicious trouble in the ground  
Tormented by the quicken'd blood of roots,  
And softly prick'd by golden crocus-sheaves  
In token of the harvest-time of flowers.

E. B. BROWNING. 1809-1861

### March 6.

*East winds prevail.*

When the wind is in the east,  
'Tis good for neither man nor beast.

*Folk Lore.*

There is some soul of goodness in things evil,  
Would men but lovingly distil it out.

SHAKSPERE. *K. Henry V.*, Act iv. Sc. 1.  
1564-1616

When new-born March made fresh the hopeful air.  
WM. MORRIS.

\* *Ver*, i.e. Spring.

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### March 7.

*Perpetua Martyr.*

Flowers of the Spring . . . . . daffodils  
That come before the swallow dare, and take  
The winds of March with beauty ; violets dim,  
But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes  
Or Cytherea's breath.

SHAKSPERE. *Winter's Tale*, Act iv. S  
1564-1616

### March 8.

*Apricot-tree blossoms.*

This is the state of man ; to-day he puts forth  
The tender leaves of hope, to-morrow blossoms,  
And bears his blushing honours thick upon him :  
The third day comes a frost, a killing frost ;  
And when he thinks, good easy man, full surely  
His greatness is a-ripening,—nips his root,—  
And then he falls.

SHAKSPERE. *K. Henry VIII.*, Act iii. §

### March 9.

*Daffodil (pseudo Narcissus) flowers plentifully.*

—When all at once I saw a crowd,  
A host, of golden daffodils ;  
Beside the Lake, beneath the trees,  
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.  
\* \* \* \* \*

I gazed, and gazed,—but little thought  
What wealth to me the scene had brought :  
For oft when on my couch I lie,  
In vacant or in pensive mood,  
They flash upon that inward eye  
Which is the light of solitude ;  
*And then my heart with pleasure fills,*  
*And dances with the daffodils.*

WORDSWORTH. 1770-185

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## March 10.

*Oats are sown.*

Fancy, with prophetic glance,  
Sees the teeming months advance,  
The field, the forest, green and gay,  
The dappled slope, the tedded hay;  
Sees the reddening orchard glow,  
The harvest wave, the vintage flow.

THOMAS WARTON. 1728-1790

## March 11.

*The bleating of lambs is heard.*

Come quickly Spring ! No more delay  
To bless us with thy genial sway.  
Thy beams have yet but faintly shone,  
By storms and darkness soon o'erborne.  
No fostering warmth they yet have shed  
To wake the blossoms of the mead.  
Oh come, thou queen of all delights,  
Though late, to bless our longing sights !  
The meads shall smile ; the frisking flock  
Shall bleat from every vale and rock.

SIR EGERTON BRYDGES. 1762-1837

## March 12.

*The Brimstone and Nettle-Butterflies may be looked for.*

The little moth opens its silken wings,  
And from right to left like a blossom flings ;  
The midge and the fly, from their long dull sleep,  
Venture again on the light to peep.  
The partridge whirrs from the glade : the mole  
Pops out from the earth, its wintry hole,  
*And the squirrel's small nose perking forth you may see*  
*At the fungous nook of its own beech-tree.*

MOIR. 1798-1851

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### March 13.

*March Gilly-flower blossoms on old walls.*

Sweet wall-flower, sweet wall-flower,  
Thou conjurest up for me  
Full many a soft and sunny hour  
Of boyhood's thoughtless glee;  
When joy from out the daisies grew  
In woodland pastures green,  
And summer skies were far more blue  
Than since they e'er have been.

MOIR. 1798-1857

A flower is not a flower alone,  
A thousand thoughts invest it.

### March 14.

*The larch shows her tassels of spring green.*

#### THE VOICE OF SPRING.

I come, I come ! ye have call'd me long,  
I come o'er the mountains with light and song :  
I have breathed on the South, and the chestnut-flowers  
By thousands, have burst in the forest-bowers.  
I have pass'd o'er the hills of the stormy North,  
And the larch has hung all his tassels forth ;  
The dark pine has a fringe of softer green,  
And the moss looks bright where my step has been.

MRS. HEMANS. 1794-1835

### March 15.

*The Throstle (Mavis, or Song-Thrush) sings.*

And hark ! how blithe the Throstle sings.

He, too, is no mean preacher ;

Come forth into the light of things,

Let Nature be your teacher.

She has a world of ready wealth

Our minds and hearts to bless—

Spontaneous wisdom breathed by health,

Truth breathed by cheerfulness.

WORDSWORTH.

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## March 16.

*Elm and elder leaf. Ash and willow flower.*

How various greens in faint degrees  
Tinge the tall groups of various trees ;  
While, careless of the changing year,  
The pine cerulean, never sere,  
Towers distinguish'd from the rest,  
And proudly vaunts her winter vest.

THOMAS WARTON. 1728-1790

## March 17.

*Birds are pairing.*

Winter is come and gone ;  
The airs and streams renew their joyous tone :  
The ants, the bees, the swallows re-appear ;  
Fresh leaves and flowers deck the dead seasons' bier ;  
The amorous birds now pair in every brake,  
And build their mossy homes in field and brere ;  
And the green lizard, and the golden snake,  
Like unimprison'd flames, out of their trance awake,

SHELLEY. 1792-1822

## March 18.

*Lambs sport in the pastures.*

Newborn flocks, in rustic dance  
Frisking, ply their feeble feet,  
Forgetful of their wintry trance  
The birds Spring's presence greet.  
But chief the skylark warbles high  
His trembling, thrilling ecstasy :  
And, lessening from the dazzled sight  
Melts into air and liquid light.

GRAY. 1716-1771

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## March 19.

### *Ploughing and Harrowing.*

Joyous, the husbandman his lusty steers  
Drives from their stalls to where the well-used plough  
Lies in the furrow. To the harness'd yoke  
They lend the shoulder and begin their toil ;  
While through the neighbouring fields the sower stalks  
With measured step, and liberal throws the grain  
Into the fruitful bosom of the ground :  
The harrow follows harsh, and shuts the scene.

THOMSON. 1699-1748

## March 20.

### *Rooks are stirring.*

A dappled sky, a world of meadows ;  
Circling above us the black rooks fly ;  
Forward, and backward ; lo, their shadows  
Flit on the blossoming tapestry—  
  
Flit on the beck, for her long grass parteth,  
As hair from a maid's bright eyes blown back ;  
And, lo, the sun, like a lover, darteth  
His flattering smile on her wayward track.

JEAN INGELOW.

## March 21.

### *The Vernal Equinox. Violets may be seen here and there among the snowdrops.*

First came the forward darlings of the Spring,  
Snowdrops, and violets, and daisies white,  
The year's faint smiles before its burst of mirth,  
The soft sweet-breathing babies of the earth,  
Close to her warm brown bosom nestling in,  
That the wild winds take laughing by the chin :

FRANCIS ANNE KEMBLE.

*Amid the howl of more than wintry storms,  
The halcyon hears the voice of vernal hours,  
Already on the wing.*

S. T. COLERIDGE. 1772-1834

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### March 22.

*The ring dove coos.*

I have found out a gift for my love,  
I have found where the wood-pigeons breed,  
But she bade me the plunder forbear,  
For she said 'twas a barbarous deed,  
And he ne'er could be true, she averred,  
Who would rob a poor bird of her young ;  
And I loved her the more when I heard  
Such tenderness fall from her tongue.

SHENSTONE. 1714-1763

### March 23.

*Fragrant Mezereon (Daphne) flowers.*

Odours of spring, my sense ye charm  
With fragrance premature ;  
And 'mid these days of sad alarm  
Almost to hope allure.

Methinks with purpose soft ye come  
To tell of brighter hours ;  
Of May's blue skies, abundant bloom,  
Her sunny gales and showers.

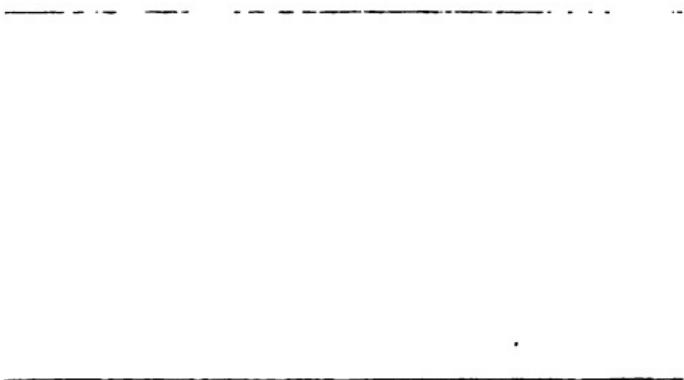
MRS. TIGHE. (*From her sick bed.*  
1773-1810)

### March 24.

*Woodcutters at work.*

Each hedge is cover'd thick with green  
And, where the hedger late hath been,  
Young tender shoots begin to grow  
From out the mossy stumps below.  
But woodmen still on Spring intrude,  
*And storm the greening solitude,*  
*With sharpen'd axes felling down*  
*The oak-trees, budding into brown.*

C. ARE. 1793-1864



### March 25.

*Lady day. Festival of the Annunciation.*

Consider the lilies how they grow. *Matt. vi. 28.*

He feedeth among the lilies. Until the day break, and the shadows flee away. *Song of Solomon, ii. 16, 17.*

Shall I be left forgotten in the dust,

When Death relenting lets the flower revive?

Shall Nature's voice, to man alone unjust,

Bid him, tho' doom'd to perish, hope to live?

No; Heaven's immortal Spring shall yet arrive,

And man's majestic beauty bloom again,

Bright thro' the eternal year of Love's triumphant reign!

BEATTIE. 1735-1803

### March 26.

*Searching blasts frequent.*

Yesterday the sullen year

Saw the snowy whirlwind fly;

Mute was the music of the air,

The herd stood drooping by;

Their raptures now, that wildly flow,

No yesterday nor morrow know;

'Tis man alone that joy descries

With forward and reverted eyes.

GRAY. 1716-1771

*Ham.* The air bites shrewdly: it is very cold.

*Hor.* It is a nipping and an eager air. *Hamlet, Act. i. Sc. 4.*

SHAKSPERE. 1564-1616

### March 27.

*Perch and other river-fish are spawning.*

Man's life is warm, glad, sad, 'twixt loves and graves,

Boundless in hope, honoured with pangs austere,

Heaven-gazing; and his angel-wings he craves:—

The fish is swift, small-needing, vague yet clear,

*A cold, sweet, silver life, wrapped in round waves,*

*Quicken'd with touches of transporting fear.*

LEIGH HUNT. (*From "The Fish, the Man, and the Spirit."*) 1784-1859.

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## March 28.

### *Buttercups flower.*

And O the buttercups ! That field  
O' the cloth of gold, where pennons swam,—  
Where France set up his lilded shield,  
His oriflamb,—

And Henry's lion-standard roll'd :  
What was it to their matchless sheen !  
Their million, million, drops of gold  
Among the green !

JEAN INGELOW.

## March 29.

### *Sulphur butterfly appears.*

Before me wavers Spring's first butterfly ;  
From out the sunny noon there starts the cuckoo's cry :  
The daisied meads are musical with lambs ;  
Some play, some feed, some, white as snowflakes, lie  
In the glad sunshine, by their silent dams.

ALEX. SMITH. 1830-1867

## March 30.

### *Dandelions flower by the wayside.* ("The Sunflower of the Spring.")

Yea, welcome March ! and though I die ere June,  
Yet for the hope of life I give thee praise,  
Striving to swell the burden of the tune  
That even now I hear thy brown birds raise,  
Unmindful of the past or coming days ;  
Who sing : "O joy ! a new year is begun :  
What happiness to look upon the sun !"

W.M. MORRIS.

Like little frosts that sometime threat the Spring  
To add a more rejoicing to the prime

And give the sneaped birds more cause to sing,

Pain pays the income of each precious thing.

SHAKSPEARE. *Rape of Lucrece.* 1564-1616

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## March 31.

*Snow disappears from the hollows.*

My sense is ravish'd, when I see  
This happy season's jubilee.  
What shall I term it? a new birth?  
The resurrection of the earth,  
Which had been buried long ago  
In a cold winding-sheet of snow.  
The Winter's breath had paved o'er  
With crystal stone the world's great floor;  
But now the earth is liveried  
In verdant suits by fair Spring dyed.

DANIEL CUDMORE, 1655. 1617-1688

Now the golden morn aloft  
Waves her dew-bespangled wing,  
With vermeil cheek and whisper soft  
She woos the tardy Spring:  
Till April starts, and calls around  
The sleeping fragrance from the ground.

GRAY. 1716-1771

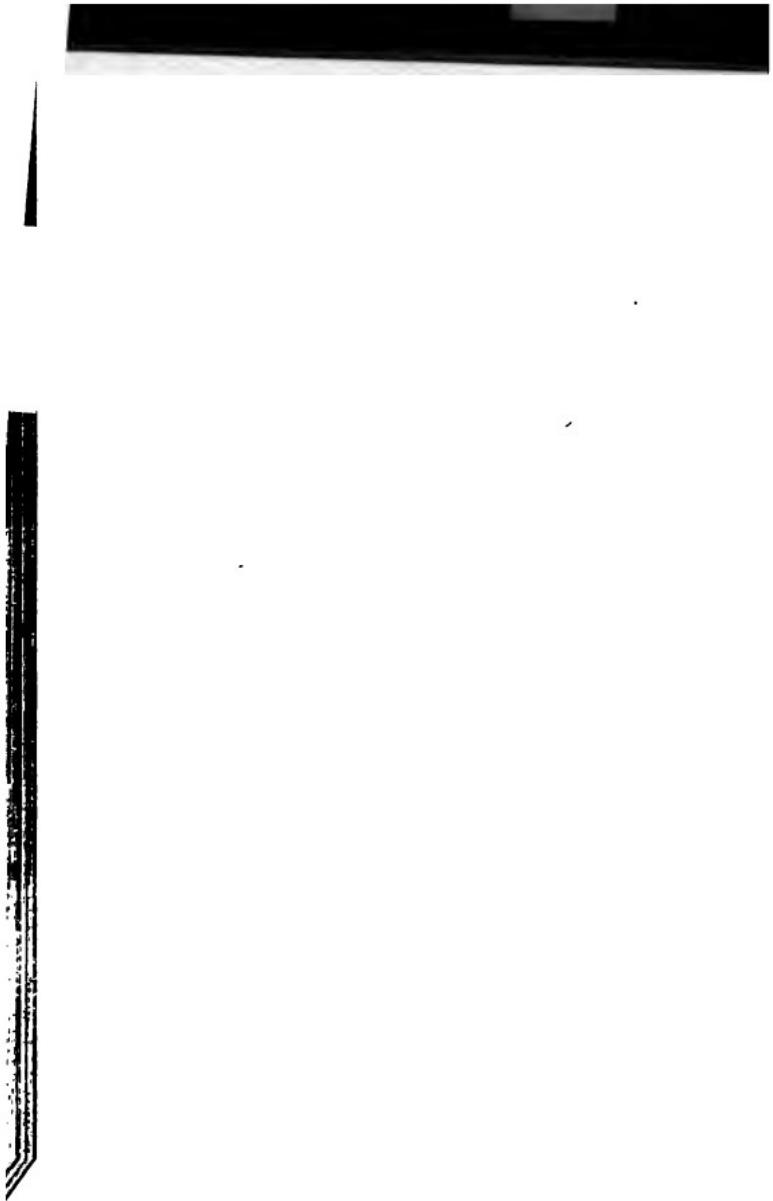
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*Beauty—a living presence of the earth,  
Surpassing the most fair ideal forms  
Which craft of delicate spirits hath composed  
From earth's materials—waits upon my steps ;  
Pitches her tents before me as I move,  
An hourly neighbour. Paradise, and groves  
Elysian, Fortunate Fields—Why should they be  
A history only of departed things,  
Or a mere fiction of what never was ?  
For the discerning intellect of man,  
When wedded to this goodly universe  
In love and holy passion, shall find these  
A simple produce of the common day.*

WORDSWORTH. 1770-1850



## April.

APRIL, or Aprilis, so called from the Latin verb *aperire* to open, is the only month to which the Romans gave a name expressive of the appearances of nature. The Saxons called *Œster-monat*, or Easter-month. Among the days set apart for observance at this season, are *Palm Sunday*, i.e. the Sunday before Easter, when we commemorate our Lord's first entrance into Jerusalem; *Maundy Thursday*, in memory of the day when our Lord commanded His disciples to partake together of bread and wine in remembrance of Him; the Friday before Easter Sunday, called *Good Friday*, and kept as a solemn fast in memory of the crucifixion, and *Easter Sunday*, kept as a joyful feast in all Christian countries, in remembrance of the Resurrection of our blessed Lord. — This "day of days" regulates all the other holy days, as the Sunday after the first full moon following the 21st March, is ordered to be observed as Easter Sunday. As this cannot happen earlier than the 22nd March or later than the 25th April, these two days are called the *Easter limits*. The following Sunday is called *Low Sunday*, because it was usual on that day to repeat some of the Easter festivities, and thus make it a sort of lower or inferior festival. The 23rd is honoured as the Festival of *St. George*, the patron Saint of England. April is a delightful month, though the most variable, since a constant interchange of sunshine and shower is best for germination, a settled April being generally unpropitious for a fruitful year. Our summer guests, the swallows and martins, nowiven the scene :—

The swift-wing'd swallow feeding as it flies,  
And the fleet martlet thrilling through the skies.

The cuckoo also appears at this season, and many plants which are named after it, such as *cuckoo-pint* and *cuckoo-flower*, as in Greece the young fig and the cuckoo had the same name, *coccus*, from their appearing together. Other summer birds arrive in April, at which time the male birds are in full song, and :—

A quire of chirping minstrels bring  
In triumph to the world the youthful Spring.

### April 1.

*Light showers prevail.*

The April's in her eyes : it is love's Spring,  
And these the showers to bring it on.

SHAKSPERE. *Ant. and Cleo.*, Act iii. Sc. 2.  
1564-1616

April weeps—but O ye hours !  
Follow with May's fairest flowers.

SHELLEY. 1792-1822

O ye showers and dew, bless ye the Lord :  
Praise Him, and magnify Him forever.

*Song of the Three Children.*

### April 2.

*Marsh marigolds in bloom.*

And winking Marybuds begin to ope their golden eyes.

SHAKSPERE. *Cymbeline*, Act ii. Sc. 3.  
1564-1616

The marigold that goes to bed with the sun,  
And with him rises weeping.

Ibid. *King Henry V.*, Act iv. Sc. 3.

Her eyes like marigolds had sheathed their light,  
And canopied in darkness sweetly lay,  
Till they might open to adorn the day.

Ibid. *Rape of Lucrece.*

### April 3.

*The elm in leaf. Chaffinch sings.*

Oh, to be in England,  
Now that April's there,  
And whoever wakes in England  
Sees, some morning unaware,  
That the lowest boughs and the brushwood sheaf  
*Round the elm-tree bole* are in tiny leaf,  
*While the chaffinch sings* on the orchard bough,  
*In England—now !*

ROBERT BROWNING.

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### April 4.

*Titlark sings. Snipe are piping.*

—When proud-pied April dress'd in all his trim  
Hath put a spirit of youth in everything ;  
The lays of birds . . . . . The sweet smell  
Of different flowers, in odour and in hue.

SHAKSPERE. Sonnet xciii. 1564-1616

The Spring arose on that garden fair,  
And the spirit of love fell everywhere ;  
The snowdrop, and then the violet,  
Arose from the ground with warm rain wet,  
And their breath was mix'd with soft odour sent  
From the turf,—like the voice and the instrument.

P. B. SHELLEY. 1792-1822

### April 5.

*House-swallow appears.*

The welcome guest of settled spring,  
The swallow, too, is come at last ;  
Just at sunset, when thrushes sing,  
I saw her dash with rapid wing,  
And hail'd her as she pass'd.

CHARLOTTE SMITH. 1749-1806

### April 6.

*Greenfinch sings.*

What wak'st thou, Spring ? Sweet voices in the woods,  
And reed-like echoes, that have long been mute,  
Thou bringest back, to fill the solitudes,  
The lark's clear pipe, the cuckoo's viewless flute,  
Whose tone seems breathing mournfulness or glee  
E'en as our hearts may be.

FELICIA HEMANS. 1794-1835

O Lady ! we receive but what we give,  
And in our life alone does nature live ;  
*Ours is her wedding-garment, ours her shroud !—*  
*From the soul itself must issue forth,*  
*A light, a glory.—*

COLERIDGE. 1772-1834

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## April 7.

*Daisies whiten the landscape.*

O Nature ! holy, meek, and mild,  
Thou dweller on the mountain wild,  
Thou lover of the daisied sod,  
Where Spring's white foot has lately trod—  
Thrice-sainted matron ! in whose face  
Who looks in love, will light on grace.

ALLAN CUNNINGHAM. 1785-1842

## April 8.

*Primroses nestle in hedgerows*

**WITH A PRIMROSE.**

Ask me why I send you here  
This firstling of the infant year,  
Ask me why I send to you  
This primrose all bepearl'd with dew ;  
I straight will whisper in your ears  
The sweets of love are wash'd with tears.

Ask me why this flower doth shew  
So yellow, green, and sickly too ;  
Ask me why the stalk is weak,  
And bending yet it doth not break,  
I must tell you, these discover  
What doubts and fears are in a lover.

THOMAS CAREW. 1580-1639

## April 9.

*April note of the cuckoo heard in the South of England.*

Hail, beauteous stranger of the grove,  
Attendant on the spring !  
Now Heaven repairs thy vernal seat,  
And woods thy welcome sing.

Soon as the blossoms deck the green,  
Thy certain voice we hear ;  
Hast thou a star to guide thy path,  
Or mark the rolling year ?

LOGAN. 1748-1788

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### April 10.

*Yellow wood-sorrel may be found, the “cuckoo-buds” of Shakspere. (Now become rare.)*

When daisies pied, and violets blue,  
And lady-smocks all silver white,  
And cuckoo-buds of yellow hue,  
Do paint the meadows with delight.

SHAKSPERE. *Love's Labour's Lost,*  
Act v. Sc. 2. 1564-1616

The merry cuckoo, messenger of Spring.

SPENSER.

### April 11.

*Blackthorn in flower.*

What though the clouds oft lour ! Their threats but end  
In summer showers, that scarcely interrupt  
The merle's dulcet pipe,—melodious bird  
He, hid behind the milkwhite sloe-thorn spray,  
(Whose early flowers anticipate the leaf)  
Welcomes the time of buds, the infant year.

JAS. GRAHAME. 1765-1811

Then the thrushes sang,  
And shook my pulses and the elms' new leaves.

E. B. BROWNING. 1809-1861

### April 12.

*The trout rise.*

The finger of God hath touch'd the earth,  
And it starts from its slumber in smiling mirth.  
Behold, it awakes in the bird and tree,  
In the springing flower and the sprouting tree,  
And the leaping trout, and the lapsing stream,  
And the south-wind soft, and the warm sunbeam :—  
From the sward beneath, and the boughs above,  
Come the scent of flowers and the sounds of love.

*Then hast thee hither, and join thy voice  
With a world's that shouts, “Rejoice! Rejoice!”*

MOIR. 1798-1851

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### April 13.

*Orchards in full bloom.*

O fair mid-Spring, besung so oft and oft,  
How can I praise thy loveliness enow ?  
Thy suns that burn not, and thy breezes soft  
That o'er the blossoms of the orchard blow,  
The thousand things that 'neath the young leaves grow,  
The hopes and chances of the growing year,  
Winter forgotten long, and summer near.

W.M. MORRIS.

### April 14.

*Swift appears.*

Sure something more to thee is given  
Than others of the feather'd race ;  
Some gift divine, some spark from heaven  
That guides thy flight from place to place.  
Still freely come,—still freely go,  
Ah ! blessings on thy vigorous wing !  
May thy brave flight meet no rude foe,  
Delightful messenger of Spring.

W. FRANKLIN.

### April 15.

*Time of palm-gathering.*

In Rome upon Palm Sunday, they bear true palms ;  
The Cardinals bow reverently, and sing old psalms,  
Elsewhere the psalms are sung mid olive-branches,—  
Sad willow buds and holly-boughs must serve  
In northern climes of storms and avalanches.

GOETHE. 1749-1832

See now the willow's spray—emboss'd  
With oval knobs of silky down,  
Which soon in form of papal crown  
*Shall* decorate the rustic stem  
*With* many a golden diadem.

B.P. MANT. 1776-1868

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## April 16.

### *Crab-apple in bloom.*

The streams, rejoiced that winter's work is done,  
Talk of to-morrow's cowslips as they run.  
Wild apple ! thou art bursting into bloom ;  
Thy leaves are coming, snowy-blossom'd thorn !  
Wake, buried lily ! Spirit, quit thy tomb ;  
And thou, shade-loving hyacinth, be born !

EBENEZER ELLIOTT. 1781-1849

## April 17.

### *Nightingale sings in Southern Counties.*

Thou wast not born for death, immortal bird !  
No hungry generations tread thee down ;  
The voice I hear this passing night was heard  
In ancient days by emperor and clown :  
Perhaps the selfsame song had found a path  
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,  
She stood in tears amid the alien corn.

KEATS. 1796-1821

## April 18.

### *Variable weather prevails.*

Oh how this Spring of love resembleth  
The uncertain glory of an April day !  
Which now shows all the beauty of the sun,  
And by and bye a cloud takes all away.

*Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Act i. Sc. 3.

Sunshine and rain at once.

*King Lear*, Act iv. Sc. 3.

Faster than springtime showers comes thought on thought.  
*Henry IV.*, Act iii. Sc. 1.

Spongy April.

SHAKSPERE. *Tempest*, Act iv. Sc. 1.  
1564-1616

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### April 19.

*Morning showers. Male birds in full song.*

Fraught with a transient, frozen shower,  
If a cloud should haply lower,  
Sailing o'er the landscape dark,  
Mute on a sudden is the lark ;  
But when gleams the sun again  
O'er the pearl-besprinkled plain,  
She mounts, and, lessening to the sight,  
Salutes the blithe return of light,  
And high her tuneful track pursues,  
'Mid the dim rainbow's scatter'd hues.

THOMAS WARTON. 1728-1790.

### April 20.

*The rainbow appears.*

Yes, faithful to the sacred page,  
Heaven still rebuilds thy span,  
Nor lets the type grow pale with age  
That first spoke peace to man.

CAMPBELL. 1777-1844

Nor ever yet

The melting rainbow's vernal-tinctured hues  
To me have shone so pleasing, as when first  
The hand of science pointed out the path  
In which the sunbeams, gleaming from the west,  
Fall on the watery cloud, whose darksome veil  
Involves the orient. AKENSIDE. 1721-1770

### April 21.

*A clear shining after rain.*

—The watery ground that late did mourn  
Was strew'd with flowers for the return  
Of the wish'd bridegroom to the earth.  
The well-accorded birds did sing,—  
And warbling murmurs of a brook  
And varied notes of leaves that shook,  
*An harmony of parts did bind.*

LORD HERBERT OF CHERBURY. 1581-1648

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## April 22.

*Fruit-buds swell.*

Come hither, come hither, and mark how swell  
The fruit-buds of the jargonelle.  
The delicate peach-trees' branches run  
O'er the warm wall, glad to catch the sun ;  
And the cherry proclaims of cloudless weather  
When its fruit and the blackbirds will toy together.

MOIR. 1798-1851

Love comforteth like sunshine after rain,  
Love's gentle spring doth always fresh remain.  
SHAKSPERE. *Venus and Adonis.* 1564-1616

## April 23.

*St. George's day.*

Spring, the sweet Spring, is the year's pleasant king,  
Then blooms each thing, then maids dance in a ring ;  
Then palm and may make the country house gay,  
Lambs brisk and play, the shepherds pipe all day ;  
The fields breathe sweet, the daisies kiss our feet,  
Young lovers meet,—old wives a-sunning sit.  
Cold doth not sting—the pretty birds sing—  
Cuckoo, jugge, jugge, pu we, to witta woo.

T. NASH. 1564-1601

## April 24.

*Swallows dip and skim.*

Scarce can his clear and nimble eyesight follow  
The freaks and dartings of the black-wing'd swallow ;  
Delighting much to see it half at rest,  
Dip so refreshingly its wings and breast  
'Gainst the smooth surface, and to mark anon  
The widening circles into nothing gone,  
*To feel the beauty of the silent eve,*  
*Which seem'd full loth this happy world to leave,*  
*The light dwelt o'er the scene so lingeringly.*

KEATS. 1796-1821

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### April 25.

*St. Mark's day.*

Lessons sweet of Spring returning,  
Welcome to the thoughtful heart,  
May I call ye sense or learning,  
Instinct pure, or heaven-taught art ?  
Be your title what it may,  
Sweet the lengthening April day,  
While with you the soul is free,  
Ranging wild o'er hill and lea.

KEBLE. 1792-1856

### April 26.

*Ferns uncurl their fronds.*

Oh ! for the temperate airs that blow  
Upon that darling of the sea  
Where neither sunshine, rain, nor snow,  
For three days holds supremacy ;  
But ever-varying skies contend  
The blessings of all climes to lend,  
To make that tiny, wave-rock'd isle  
In never-fading beauty smile.  
England, oh England ! for the breeze  
That slowly stirs thy forest trees !  
Thy ferny brooks, thy mossy fountains,  
Thy beechen woods, thy heathery mountains.

FRANCES ANNE KEMBLE.

*Written where the thermometer stood at 98° in the shade.*

### April 27.

*Light haze and dappled skies prevail.*

Clear had the day been from the dawn,  
All chequer'd was the sky,  
Thin clouds like scarfs of cobweb lawn,  
Veil'd heaven's most glorious eye.  
The wind had no more strength than this,  
*That leisurely it blew*  
*To make one leaf the next to kiss*  
*That closely by it grew.*

DRAYTON. 1563-1631

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## April 28.

*The dragon-fly appears.*

Then the green rushes—O, so glossy green—  
The rushes, they would whisper, rustle, shake ;  
And forth on floating gauze, no jewell'd queen  
So rich, the green-eyed dragon-flies would break,  
And hover on the flowers—áerial things,  
With little rainbows flickering on their wings.

JEAN INGELOW.

## April 29.

*Nightingale sings continuously.*

Most musical, most melancholy.

MILTON. 1608-1674

"Tis the merry nightingale,  
That crowds, and hurries, and precipitates,  
With fast thick warble, his delicious notes,  
As he were fearful that an April night  
Would be too short for him to utter forth  
His love-chant, and disburthen his full soul  
Of all its music.

COLERIDGE. 1772-1834

## April 30.

*Hares and rabbits nibble the short grass.*

All things that love the sun are out of doors ;  
The sky rejoices in the morning's birth,  
The grass is bright with raindrops ; on the moors  
The Hare is running races in her mirth ;  
And with her feet she from the splashy earth  
Raises a mist ; that, glittering in the sun,  
Runs with her all the way, wherever she doth run.

WORDSWORTH. 1770-1850

*Storms oft 'twixt May and April are to see,  
When winds breathe sweet, unruly though they be.*

SHAKSPERE. 1564-1616

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*EACH THING RENEWS SAVE ONLY THE  
LOVER.*

*The soote season, that bud and bloom forth brings  
With green hath clad the hill, and eke the vale.  
The nightingale, with feathers new she sings ;  
The turtle to her mate hath told her tale.  
Summer is come, for every spray now springs,  
The hart hath hung his old head on the pale ;  
The buck in brake his winter coat he slings ;  
The fishes flete with new repaired scale ;  
The adder all her slough away she slings ;  
The swift swallow pursueth the flies smale ;  
The busy bee her honey now she mings,<sup>1</sup>  
Winter is worn that was the flowers' bale.*

*And thus I see among these pleasant things  
Each care decays, and yet my sorrow springs !  
THE EARL OF SURREY.*

*Born circa 1517—beheaded 1547.*

<sup>1</sup> *Mingles.*



## May.

MAY, the fifth month of our year, has held this place since the time of Numa, but the origin of the name is not known. Our Saxon ancestors called it *Tri-Milchi*, since the rich growth of the young grass enabled the cows to give milk three times in the day. *May-day*—the first of May, “the merry month of May”—has long been regarded as a day of rejoicing, and of games that have come down to us from the Romans, who dedicated them to Flora, the Goddess of Fruit and Flowers. The first day of May is remembered by the Church as that of the martyrdom of *St. Philip and St. James*. *Rogation Sunday* is the fifth after Easter, and is so called because the three following days are devoted to prayer and beseeching in preparation for *Ascension day*, observed on the day following, called also *Holy Thursday*. The *second Sunday after Ascension* is called *Whitsunday*, or the *Day of Pentecost*, and the following is called *Trinity Sunday*. The twenty-ninth is called *Oak-apple day*, in remembrance of King Charles II. being concealed in the oak, after his defeat at Worcester.

If March and April have been favourable, the country is in its fullest beauty in May. The trees are in full foliage, and orchards and hedgerows one mass of flowers, but the season is an anxious one to the gardener, owing to the danger of injury from frosts and blights. Towards the end of the month bees begin to swarm, and the latest of our summer birds arrive. Most of the insects are on the wing, and those “floating flowers,” the butterflies—the peacock, tortoiseshell, and cabbage butterflies are very numerous at the end of the month. Seedlings grow rapidly, and weeding is the chief occupation of the gardener. About the twelfth of the month (Old May Day) cattle are turned out into the pastures, and the business of cheese-making begins.

The warmth of the sun is tempered by cool winds, and every breeze is loaded with the perfume of blossoms, for

*March winds and April showers,  
Have brought forth May flowers.*

## May 1.

*St. Philip and St. James. May day.*

The young lambs are bleating in the meadows,  
The young birds are chirping in the nest,  
The young fawns are playing with the shadows,  
The young flowers are blowing towards the west,—  
Go out, children, from the mine, and from the city,  
Pluck you handfuls of the meadow-cowslips pretty.

E. B. BROWNING. (*From the "Cry of the Children."*)  
1809-1861

## May 2.

*Poetical Narcissus flowers.*

Bloom'd the pied wind-flowers, and tulips tall,  
And narcissi, the fairest among them all,  
Who gaze on their eyes in the stream's recess  
Till they die of their own dear loveliness ;  
And the naiad-like lily of the vale,  
Whom youth makes so fair and passion so pale,  
That the light of its tremulous bells is seen  
Through their pavilions of tender green.

SHELLEY. 1792-1822

## May 3.

*Whitethroats build.*

—After April, when May follows,  
And the whitethroat builds, and all the swallows !  
Hark, where my blossom'd pear-tree in the hedge  
Leans to the field and scatters on the clover  
Blossoms and dewdrops—at the bent spray's edge—  
That's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice over,  
*Lest you should think he never could recapture*  
*The first fine careless rapture !*

ROBERT BROWNING.

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### May 4.

*Cherry-trees in blossom. Lilacs bud.*

When apple-trees in blossoms are,  
And cherries of a silken white,  
And king-cups deck the meadows fair,  
And daffodils in brooks delight ;  
When golden wallflowers bloom around,  
And purple violets scent the ground,  
And lilac 'gins to shew her bloom,—  
We then may say the May is come.

CLARE. 1793-1864

### May 5.

*Cowslips in flower.*

Now the bright morning-star, day's harbinger,  
Comes dancing from the East, and leads with her  
The flowery May, who from her green lap throws  
The yellow cowslip, and the pale primrose.  
Hail beauteous May! that dost inspire  
Mirth and youth and warm desire !

MILTON. 1608-1674

And buttercups, the little children's dower.

ROBERT BROWNING.

### May 6.

*Glow-worms shine. Nightingales in full song.*

They answer and provoke each others' song—  
With skirmish and capricious passagings,  
And murmurs musical, and swift jug, jug,  
And one low piping sound more sweet than all—

On moonlit evenings

You may perchance behold them on the twigs,

*Their bright, bright eyes, their eyes both bright and full,  
Glistening, while many a glow-worm in the shade  
Lights up her love-torch.*

COLERIDGE. 1772-1834

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## May 7.

*Black-veined white butterfly appears.*

Hedgerows all alive

With birds, and gnats, and large white butterflies  
Which look as if the May flower had caught life  
And palpitated forth upon the wind.

E. B. BROWNING. 1809-1861

The small field-mouse, with wide transparent ears,  
Comes softly forth, and softly disappears,  
And gleaming fishes darting to and fro,  
Make restless silver in the pools below.

HON. MRS. NORTON.

## May 8.

*Cowslips abound. Primroses still linger. Sweetbriar scents the air.*

Thou shalt not lack

The flower that's like thy face, pale primrose, nor  
The azur'd harebell, like thy veins ; no, nor  
The leaf of eglantine, whom not to slander  
Out-sweeten'd not thy breath.

SHAKSPERE. *Cymbeline*, Act iv. Sc.  
1564-1616

The flowery May who from her green lap throws  
The yellow cowslip, and the pale primrose.

MILTON. 1608-1664

## May 9.

*Sand-martin appears.*

Adown the rock small runlets wept,  
And reckless ivies lean'd and crept,  
And little spots of sunshine slept

On its brown steeps and made them fair ;  
And broader beams athwart it shot,  
Where martins cheep'd in many a knot,  
*For they had ta'en a sandy plot*

*And scoop'd another Petra there.*

JEAN INGELOW

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## May 10.

*Crickets chirp. Sedge-Warbler sings.*

As full of spirit as the month of May.

SHAKSPERE. *First part of King Henry IV.,*

Act iv. Sc. i. 1564-1616

Then sing ye birds, sing, sing a joyous song !

And let the young lambs bound

As to the tabor's sound !

We, in thought will join your throng,

Ye that pipe and ye that play,

Ye that through your hearts to-day

Feel the gladness of the May !

WORDSWORTH. 1770-1850

## May 11.

*The hazel in leaf.*

I see the hazel's rough notch'd leaves

Each morning wide and wider spread,

While every sigh the zephyr heaves

Scatters the dewdrops on my head.

LEYDEN. 1775-1811

The birds chant melody on every bush !

The green leaves quiver with the cooling wind,

And make a chequer'd shadow on the ground.

SHAKSPERE. *Tit. Andron., Act ii. Sc. 3.*

1564-1616

## May 12.

*Old May day.*

I praise thee, Earth ! Belovèd sign

From the Father-soul to mine !

By thy valleys, warm and green,

By the copses' elms between,

By their birds which (like a sprite,

Scatter'd by a strong delight

Into fragments musical)

Stir and sing in every bush.—

E. B. BROWNING. 1809-1861

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### May 13.

*Houses decorated in honour of Whitsuntide.*

When yew is out, then birch comes in,  
And many flowers beside,  
Both of a fresh and fragrant kinné,  
To honour Whitsuntide.  
Green rushes then, and sweetest bents,  
Come in for comely ornaments.

HERRICK. 1591-1674

### May 14.

*Lilacs in flower.*

Spring must hang laburnum blossoms  
On each arched bough,  
And the white and purple lilac  
Should be waving now!  
Spring must breathe till frosts shall vanish  
At her breath away,  
And then load the air around her,  
With the scent of May.

A. A. PROCTER. 1835-1864

### May 15.

*White clover in blossom.*

Oh what a life were this ! How sweet, how lovely !  
Gives not the hawthorn-bush a sweeter shade  
To shepherds, looking on their silly sheep,  
Than doth a rich embroider'd canopy  
To kings that fear their subjects' treachery.

SHAKSPERE. *Third part of King Henry V.*,  
Act ii. Sc. 5.

The lamb thy riot dooms to bleed to-day  
Had he thy reason, would he skip and play ?  
Pleased to the last, he crops the flow'ry food,  
*And licks the hand just raised to shed his blood.*  
*O blindness to the future ! kindly given*  
*That each may fill the circle mark'd by Heaven ! .*

POPE. 1638-1744

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### May 16.

*Primroses still adorn the slopes, and violets linger in hedgerows.*

I flatter'd all the beauteous country round,—  
The happy violets hiding from the roads  
The primroses run down to, carrying gold ;—  
Hills, vales, woods, netted in a silver mist,  
Farms, granges, doubled up among the hills ;  
And cattle grazing in the water'd vales,  
And cottage-chimneys smoking from the woods,  
And cottage-gardens smelling everywhere ;—  
And ankle-deep in English grass I leap'd  
And clapp'd my hands, and called all very fair.

E. B. BROWNING. (*From "Aurora Leigh."*)  
1809-1861

### May 17.

*Vines put forth shoots.*

Hark, 'tis the sparrows' goodnight twitter  
About your cottage eaves :  
And the leaf-buds on the vine are woolly,  
I noticed that to-day ;  
One day more bursts them open fully ;  
—You know the red turns grey.

ROBERT BROWNING.

### May 18.

*Purple columbine flowers and cuckoo-pint opens its sheath.*

(*Child sings*)

O columbine, open your folded wrapper  
Where two twin turtledoves dwell !  
O cuckoo-pint, toll me the purple clapper  
That hangs in your clear green bell !  
  
O velvet bee, you're a dusty fellow,  
You've powder'd your legs with gold !  
O brave marsh marybuds, rich and yellow,  
Give me your money to hold !

JEAN INGELOW.

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## May 19.

*St. Dunstan's day.*

Who talks of fame, while the religious Spring  
Offers the incense of her offering?

JEAN INGELOW.

Needs no show of mountain hoary,  
Winding shore, and deepening glen,  
Where the landscape in its glory  
Teaches truth to wandering men.  
Give true hearts but earth and sky  
And some flowers to bloom and die,  
Homely scenes and simple views  
Lowly thoughts may best infuse.

KEBLE. 1792-1856

## May 20.

*Laburnums in blossom.*

The garden trees are busy with the shower  
That fell ere sunset ; now methinks they talk,  
Lowly and sweetly as befits the hour,  
One to another down the grassy walk.  
Hark, the laburnum from his opening flower  
This cherry laurel greets in whisper light.

ARTHUR HALLAM. 1810-1833

## May 21.

*The cuckoo heard in the woods.*

But soft ! mine ear has caught a sound—from yonder wood  
it came

The spirit of the dim green glade did breathe his own glad  
name.

Yes, it is he ! the hermit bird, that apart from all his kind,  
Slow tells his beads monotonous to the soft western wind.  
Cuckoo ! Cuckoo ! he sings again—his notes are void of art ;  
*But simplest strains do soonest sound the deep founts of the heart.*

MOTHERWELL. 1797-1835

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## May 22.

*A concert in the woods.*

The thrush  
And woodlark, o'er the kind-contending throng  
Superior heard, run through the sweetest length,  
The blackbird whistles from the thorny brake ;  
The mellow bullfinch answers from the grove ;  
Nor are the linnets, o'er the flowering furze  
Pour'd out profusely, silent. Join'd to these,  
Innumerable, the jay, the rook, the daw,  
And each harsh pipe, discordant heard alone,  
Aid the full concert ; while the stock dove breathes  
A melancholy murmur through the whole.

THOMSON. 1700-1748

## May 23.

*Our latest summer birds arrive.*

The birds nor sow nor reap, yet sup and dine,  
The flowers without clothes live,  
Yet Solomon was never dress'd so fine.  
Man, still, hath toys or care ;  
He knows he hath a home, but scarce knows where :  
He says it is so far  
That he hath quite forgot how to go there.

HENRY VAUGHAN. 1621-1695

## May 24.

*Bees begin to swarm.*

The honey-bee, gath'ring his winter store,  
Seeks not alone the violet's dainty lips—  
But from all rank and noxious weeds he sips  
The single drop of sweetness. Would that we  
Sought only to draw forth the hidden sweet,  
*In all the varied human flowers we meet,*  
*In the wide garden of humanity.*

ANNE C. LYNCH.

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## May 25.

### *Bees work early and late.*

Thou wert out betimes, thou busy, busy bee !

As abroad I took my early way,

Before the cow from her resting-place

Had risen up and left her trace

On the meadow, with dew so gray.

Thou wert working late, thou busy, busy bee !

After the fall of the Cistus flower.

When the primrose of evening was ready to burst,

I heard thee last, as I saw thee first,

In the silent evening hour.

SOUTHEY. 1774-1843

## May 26.

### *St. Augustine's day.*

'Tis the mind that makes the body rich :

And as the sun breaks thro' the darkest clouds  
So honour peereth in the meanest habit.

What ! is the jay more precious than the lark,  
Because his feathers are more beautiful ?

Or is the adder better than the eel,

Because his painted skin contents the eyes ?

SHAKSPERE.

## May 27.

### *Auriculas flower in gardens.*

— Auriculas, enriched  
With shining meal o'er all their velvet leaves.

THOMSON. 1700-1748

Love, whose month is ever May,

Spied a blossom passing fair

Playing in the wanton air :

Through the velvet leaves the wind

All unseen can passage find ;

That the lover, sick to death,

Wish himself the heaven's breath.

SHAKSPERE. Love's Labour's Lost.  
Act iv. Sc. 3. 1564-1616

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## May 28.

*Spotted bugloss in flower.*

'Tis like the birthday of the world  
When earth was born in bloom,  
The light is made of many dyes,  
The air is all perfume.

There's crimson buds, and white and blue,  
The very rainbow showers  
Have turn'd to blossom where they fell,  
And sown the earth with flowers.

HOOD. 1798-1845

## May 29.

*Oak-apple day.*

The oaks which spread their broad arms to the wind,  
And bid storms come and welcome—there they stand  
To whom a summer passes like a smile.

BAILEY.

Where in venerable rows  
Widely waving oaks inclose  
The moat of yonder antique hall,  
Swarm the rooks with clamorous call.

THOMAS WARTON. 1728-1790

## May 30.

*Early roses bloom.*

Ye violets that first appear,  
By your pure purple mantles known,  
Like the proud virgins of the year.  
As if the Spring were all your own,  
What are you when the rose is blown?

So when my mistress shall be seen  
In sweetness of her looks and mind,  
By virtue first, then choice, a queen,  
Tell me if she was not design'd  
Th' eclipse and glory of her kind.  
SIR HENRY WOTTON. 1598-1639

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**May 31.**

*Wood-strawberries flower.*

They come ! the merry summer months of beauty, love, and flowers,  
They come ! the gladsome months that bring thick leafiness to bowers ;  
Up, up, my heart ! and walk abroad, fling work and care aside,  
Seek silent hills or rest thyself where peaceful waters glide ;  
Or, underneath the grateful shade of patriarchal tree,  
See, through the leaves, the cloudless sky in rapt tranquillity !

W.M. MOTHERWELL. 1797-1835

There bloom'd the strawberry of the wilderness ;  
The trembling eye-bright showed her sapphire blue,  
The thyme her purple like the blush of even ;  
And if the breath of some to no caress  
Invited, forth they peep'd so fair to view,  
All kinds alike seem'd favourites of Heaven.

WORDSWORTH.

Like the swell of some sweet tune  
May glides onward into June.

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## SUNRISE.

*Ere we retired  
The cock had crow'd, and now the eastern sky  
Was kindling, not unseen. Magnificent  
The morning rose, in memorable pomp—  
The solid mountains shone, bright as the clouds,  
Grain-tinctured, drench'd in empyrean light :  
And in the meadows and the lower grounds  
Was all the sweetness of a common dawn.—  
Dews, vapours, and the melody of birds,  
And labourers going forth to till the fields—  
A dedicated spirit, on I walk'd  
In thankful blessedness, which yet survives.*

WORDSWORTH. 1770-1850 .

(“*The Morning after the Ball.*”)



## June

HAS been the 6th month of the year, ever since Numa reformed the Roman Calendar, but the reason of its name is uncertain. Our Saxon forefathers called it *Weyd-Monat*, or Meadow Month, and afterwards *Sere-Monat*, or dry month, it being the least variable month in the year. On the 21st, is the *Summer Solstice*, when the sun appears to stand still. It is the longest day of the year—with 16 hours, 34 minutes, and 5 seconds between sunrise and sunset. The 5th is called *St. Boniface day*, in memory of the “Apostle of the Germans,” a native of Devonshire, who went to preach the Gospel in Friesland and was appointed primate of Germany. He suffered martyrdom in 755 A.D. The 11th of the month is dedicated to *St. Barnabas*, “a son of consolation,” and the companion of St. Paul, who was stoned to death in 73 A.D. The 15th is the day on which the Nile begins to rise. *Mid-summer day*, the 24th, is dedicated to *John the Baptist*. The 29th is dedicated to *St. Peter*, who was crucified under Nero, A.D. 65, on the same day on which St. Paul was beheaded. June is a busy and joyous month in the country. Sheep-shearing takes place if the weather is fine, grass and corn are in full flower, and haymaking begins in the end of June if possible, before the seeds of the grass are fully ripe. Towards the end of the month the birds are too much occupied in rearing their young to have leisure for singing. The cuckoo changes his note, and then ceases to repeat his call—hardly a note being heard in the woods, but a short song, evening and morning, from the lark and the blackbird. Swallows may be seen darting about in search of insects for their young, and barn-owls pounce upon the mice for the same purpose, grasshoppers, beetles, and flies become numerous, and the angler’s May-fly may be seen, over ponds and streams, any fine evening from the 6th to the 20th of June. The nests of wasps are at this time plundered by anglers, who find their *larvae* to be excellent bait for fish. There is not much to do in gardens, where plants are mostly coming to maturity, beyond weeding and watering, training climbing plants and blossoms. Strawberries are ripe, gooseberries and currants a ripening, and new potatoes are brought to table.

### June 1.

*Beanfields in blossom.*

O June, O June, that we desirèd so,  
Across the river thy soft breezes blow,  
Sweet with the scent of beanfields far away  
Above our heads rustle the aspens gray,  
Calm is the sky with harmless clouds beset,  
No thought of storm the morning vexes yet.

W. MORRIS.

### June 2.

*Sweet-scented Bindweed adorns roadsides.*

In all fair hues from white to mingled rose,  
Along the hedge the clasping bindweed flowers ;  
And when one chalice shuts a new one blows,  
There's blooming for all minutes of the hours.  
Along the hedge, beside the trodden lane,  
Where day by day we pass and pass again.

AUGUSTA WEBSTER.

Good Lord, it is a gracious boon for thought crazed wight  
like me,  
To smell again these summer flowers, beneath this summer  
tree !

WM. MOTHERWELL. 1797-1835

### June 3.

*Nightingale sits on her nest.*

Ay, as I live, her secret nest is here ;  
We will not plunder music of its dower,  
Nor turn a spot of happiness to thrall ;  
For melody seems hid in every flower  
That blossoms near this home. These blue-bells all  
Seem bowing to the beautiful in song ;  
And gaping cuckoo-flower, with spotted leaves,  
Seems flushing at the singing it has heard.  
*How curious is the nest ! No other bird*  
*Uses such loose materials, or weaves*  
*Its dwelling in such spots.*

CLARE. 1793-1864

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## June 4.

*Streaked rose (York and Lancaster) flowers.*

More flowers I noted . . . . .  
The lily . . . buds of marjoram . . . . .  
The roses fearfully on thorns did stand,  
One blushing shame, another white despair ;  
A third, nor red nor white, had stolen of both.  
SHAKSPERE. *Sonnet xcix. 1564-1616*

She looks as clear  
As morning roses freshly wash'd with dew.  
Ibid. *Taming the Shrew, Act ii. Sc. 1.*

## June 5.

*St. Boniface day.*

'Twas summer, through the opening grass  
The joyous flowers upsprang,  
The birds in all their different tribes  
Loud in the woodlands sang :  
All care was banish'd, and repose  
Came to my wearied breast,  
And kingdoms seem'd to wait on me,  
For I was with the blest !  
VOGELWEIDE. *The Minnesinger.*

## June 6.

*Yellow broom flowers.*

Their groves of sweet myrtle let foreign lands reckon,  
Whose bright-beaming summers exalt the perfume,  
Far dearer to me yon lone glen of green breckan,  
Wi' the burn stealing under the long yellow broom ;  
Far dearer to me are yon humble broom bowers,  
Where the blue-bell and gowan lurk lowly unseen ;  
*For there lightly tripping among the wild flowers,*  
*A listening the linnet, oft wanders my Jean.*  
BURNS. 1759-1796

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### June 7.

*Angler's May-fly appears in the evening.*

Sir, please you to look up and down  
The weedy reaches of our stream,  
And note the bubbles of the bream,  
And see the great chub take the fly,  
And watch the long pike basking lie  
Outside the shadow of the weed.

WM. MORRIS.

The day declining sheds a milder gleam,  
What time the May-fly haunts the pool or stream.

GILBERT WHITE. 1720-1793

### June 8.

*Water-violet (*Hottonia palustris*) blossoms in streams.*

Fair foxgloves look'd out from the osiers dank,  
And the wild thyme and violet breathed from the bank,  
And green fairy-nooks in the landscape were seen,  
Half hid by the grey rocks that over them lean,  
Where the light Birch above its loose tresses was waving  
And the willow below in the blue stream was laving  
Its silvery garlands of soft downy buds.

PRINGLE. 1789-1834

### June 9.

*Trailing white dog-rose in flower. (The white rose of the Yorkists.)*

Then will I raise aloft the milk-white rose,  
With whose sweet smell the air shall be perfumed.  
SHAKSPERE. *K. Henry VI.*, Act i. Sc. 1.  
1564-1616

What though the rose has prickles, yet 'tis plucked.  
Ibid. *Venus and Adonis.*

The rose looks fair, but fairer we it deem  
*For that sweet odour that doth in it live.*

Ibid. Sonnet liv.

*Flowers of all hues, and without thorn the rose.*  
MILTON. *Paradise Lost.* 1608-1674

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## June 10.

*Gelder rose in flower.*

. . . . This summer noon before me lies  
A lawn of English verdure, smooth and bright,  
Mottled with fainter hues of early hay,  
Whose fragrance, blended with the rose perfume  
From that white flowering bush, invites my sense,  
. . . . And faint thoughts  
Of childish years are borne into my brain.

ARTHUR HALLAM. 1810-1833

And we, with Nature's heart in tune, concerted harmonies.  
MOTHERWELL. 1797-1835

## June 11.

*St. Barnabas' day.*

Spring's real glory dwells not in the meaning  
Gracious though it be of her blue hours ;  
But is hidden in her tender leaning  
To the Summer's richer wealth of flowers.  
Learn the mystery of Progression duly,  
Do not call each glorious change decay :  
But know we only hold our treasures truly  
When it seems as if they pass'd away.

A. A. PROCTER. 1835-1864

## June 12.

*Eye-bright (Euphrasia) found on heath lands.*

My love hath eyes as blue and clear  
As clefts between the clouds of June ;  
A tender mouth, whose smiles are near  
To tears that gather soon :  
Her best and loveliest she takes  
To light dark places : wastes of life  
She sows with precious seed, that makes  
All richest blessings rise.

ISA CRAIG (KNOX).

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### June 13.

*Purple foxglove in blossom.*

A cloudless sky, a world of heather,  
Purple of foxglove, yellow of broom ;  
We too among them wading together,  
Shaking out honey, treading perfume.

Crowds of bees are giddy with clover,  
Crowds of grasshoppers skip at our feet,  
Crowds of larks at their matins hang over,  
Thanking the Lord for a life so sweet.

JEAN INGELOW.

### June 14.

*Honeysuckle in flower.*

Merrily, merrily shall I live now,  
Under the blossom that hangs on the bough.

SHAKSPERE. *Tempest*, Act v. Sc. 1.  
1564-1616

The pleachèd bower,—  
Where honeysuckles, ripen'd by the sun  
Forbid the sun to enter ;—like favourites,  
Made proud by princes, that advance their pride  
Against that power that bred it.

Ibid. *Much Ado About Nothing*, Act iii. Sc. 1.

### June 15.

*Evenings are long and light.*

Though now the bat  
Wheels silent by, and not a swallow twitters,  
Yet still the solitary humble-bee  
Sings in the bean-flower !—When the last rook  
Beat its straight path along the dusky air  
Homewards, I blest it ! deeming its black wing  
*Flew creaking o'er thy head, and had a charm*  
*For thee, my gentle-hearted Charles, to whom*  
*No sound is dissonant which tells of life.*

COLERIDGE. 1772-1834

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## June 16.

*Red roses in blossom.*

My love is like the red, red rose  
That sweetly blooms in June,  
My love is like a melody  
That's sweetly play'd in tune.

BURNS. 1759-1796

Gather your rosebuds while ye may,  
Old Time is still a-flying,  
And this same flower, that blooms to-day,  
To morrow may be dying.

HERRICK. 1591-1674

## June 17.

*St. Alban's day.*

Yet it was not that Nature had shed o'er the scene  
Her purest of crystal and brightest of green,  
'Twas not her soft magic of streamlet and hill,  
Oh ! no—it was something more exquisite still :  
'Twas that friends, the beloved of my bosom, were near,  
Who made every scene of enchantment more dear.

THOMAS MOORE. 1779-1852

The panzie this ! O that's for Lover's thoughts.

BEN JONSON. 1573-1637

## June 18.

*Purple pansy flowers.*

The pretiè paunce.

SPENSER. 1533-1599

Blue, darkly, deeply, beautifully blue.

SOUTHEY. 1774-1843

The lily minds me of a maiden's brow,  
The full-blown rose of lips with sweetness tipt,  
But if you seek a likeness to her eye,  
Go to the pansy, friend, and find it there.

BUCHANAN.

There's pansies, that's for thoughts.

SHAKSPEARE. *Hamlet*, Act iii. Sc. 2.  
1564-1616

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### June 19.

*Haymaking begins in favourable seasons.*

When the fresh Spring in all her state is crown'd,  
And high luxuriant grass o'erspreads the ground,  
The labourer with the circling scythe is seen  
Shaving the surface of the waving green ;  
In rising hills the fragrant harvest grows,  
And strides along the fields in tedded rows.

JOHN GAY. 1688-1732

### June 20.

*The sun shines with a burning heat.*

When God at first made man,  
Having a glass of blessings standing by,  
Let us, said He, pour on him all we can :

When almost all was out, God made a stay,  
Perceiving that, alone of all His treasure,  
Rest at the bottom lay.

Should I, said He, bestow this on My creature,  
He would adore My gifts instead of Me,  
And rest in Nature,—not the God of Nature.

Let him be rich and weary, that at least,  
If goodness lead him not, yet weariness  
May toss him to my breast.

GEORGE HERBERT. 1593-1632

### June 21.

*The longest day. Summer solstice.*

Yet by some grave thoughts attended,  
Eve reviews her calm career ;  
For the day that now is ended  
Is the longest of the year.

Summer ebbs, each day that follows  
Is a reflux from on high,  
Tending to the darksome hollows  
Where the frosts of winter lie.

WORDSWORTH. 1770-1850

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### June 22.

#### *The musk-rose flowers.*

As late I rambled in the happy fields,  
What time the skylark shakes the tremulous dew,  
I saw the sweetest flower wild nature yields,  
A fresh-blown musk-rose—gracefully it grew,  
And as I feasted on its fragrance  
I thought the garden-rose it far excell'd ;  
But when, O friend ! thy roses came to me,  
My sense with their deliciousness was spell'd ;  
Soft voices had they, that with tender plea  
Whisper'd of peace and truth and friendliness.

KEATS. (*On receiving a gift of roses.*  
1796-1821)

### June 23.

#### *Midsummer Eve. St. John's-wort flowers.*

The young maid stole through the cottage door,  
And blush'd as she sought the plant of power ;  
"Thou silver glow-worm, oh, lend me thy light,  
I must gather the mystic St. John's Wort to-night !  
The wonderful herb whose leaf will decide  
If the coming year shall make me a bride."

CAWOOD.

Love adds a precious seeing to the eye.

SHAKSPERE. *Love's Labour's Lost*  
Act iv. Sc. 3. 1564-1616

### June 24.

#### *Midsummer day. St. John Baptist.*

— A filbert hedge with wild-briar overtwined,  
The frequent chequer of a youngling tree,  
That, with a score of bright green brethren, shoot:  
From the quaint mossiness of agèd roots :  
*Round* which is heard a spring-head of clear wate  
*Babbling* so wildly of its lovely daughters  
*The spreading bluebells,—pluck'd and left to die.*

KEATS. 1796

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**June 25.**

*Song birds are rearing their young.*

**THE NIGHTINGALE'S NEST.**

There have I hunted, like a very boy,  
Creeping on hands and knees through matted thorn  
To find her nest, and see her feed her young.  
And vainly did I many hours employ :  
All seem'd as hidden as a thought unborn.—  
I've watch'd her while she sang ; and her renown  
Hath made me marvel that so famed a bird  
Should have no better dress than russet brown.

CLARE. 1793-1864

**June 26.**

*Fern-chafers first appear.*

A shady freshness, chafers whirring,  
A little piping of leaf-hid birds,  
A flutter of wings, a fitful stirring,  
A cloud to the eastward snowy as curds.  
Bare grassy slopes, where kids are tether'd,  
Round valleys, like nests all ferny-lined ;  
Round hills, with fluttering tree-tops feather'd,  
Swell high in their freckled robes behind.

JEAN INGELOW.

**June 27.**

*Sheep-shearing. Elder in flower.*

At shearing-time see how the timid sheep,  
His fleece shorn off, starts with a frighten'd leap,  
Shaking his naked skin with new-found joys,  
While others are brought in by sturdy boys !  
The shearing done, gay songs and merry plays  
Keep up a shadow still of former days,  
And the old freedom that was living then  
When masters made them merry with their men ;  
Though the old beechen bowl, that once supplied  
*The feast of furmety, is thrown aside.*

BLOOMFIELD. 1766-1823

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## June 28.

*Nightingale's note changes.*

From the dusk elm rings out a changing lay ;  
The human-hearted nightingale sings there.  
Why not, like little minstrels of the day,  
Sweet voice, fling only raptures on the air ?  
Is it she's kin to us and has our woe,  
Something that's lost ? or something yet to know ?

AUGUSTA WEBSTER.

## June 29.

*St. Peter's day.*

June drew unto its end, the hot bright days  
Now gat from men as much of blame as praise,  
As rainless still they pass'd, without a cloud,  
And growing grey at last, the barley bow'd  
Before the south-east wind.

W. MORRIS.

Shining on, shining on, by no shadow made tender,  
Till love falls asleep in the sameness of splendour.

T. MOORE. 1779-1852

## June 30.

*Bitter-sweet flowers. (*Solanum dulcamara*).*

Sweet is the rose, but grows upon a brere,  
Sweet is the juniper, but sharp his bough ;  
Sweet is the eglantine, but pricketh near.  
Sweet is the broom flower, but yet sour enow ;  
So every sweet with sour is temper'd still  
*That maketh it be coveted the more.*

*For easy things that may be got at will  
Most sorts of men do set but little store.*

SPENSER. 1553-1599

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*The world is too much with us, late and soon,  
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers.*  
*W. WORDSWORTH. 1770-1850*

*No real happiness is found  
In trailing purple on the ground.*  
*PARNELL. 1679-1718*

*Nature never did betray  
The heart that loved her ; 'tis her privilege  
Through all the years of this our life, to lead  
From joy to joy ; for she can so inform  
The mind that is within us, so impress  
With quietness and beauty, and so feed  
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues  
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all  
The dreary intercourse of daily life,  
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb  
Our cheerful faith that all which we behold  
Is full of blessing.*

*W. WORDSWORTH.*

*Written July 13th, 1798.*



## July.

THE seventh month was named *Julius*, by Mark Antony, in memory of Julius Cæsar; before which time it had been called *Quintilis*, as being the fifth from March, a name it retained under Numa after he had made it the seventh month. Our Saxon forefathers called it *Heu-Monath*, and afterwards *Mead-Monath*, from the richness of the meadows at this season. From the 3rd of July to the 11th of August are accounted *the dog days*, but the weather is not generally more sultry then than later in the summer. The 15th July is dedicated to *St. Swithin*, Bishop of Winchester, who died on the 2nd July, A.D. 864, and in token of humility left orders that he should be buried in the churchyard among the common people. The persistence of rainy weather about this time is attributed, by monkish legend, to the fact that a continuous rain setting in on the 15th July frustrated an effort to remove the good Bishop's body in solemn procession for burial with the other bishops in the choir. The 16th of July is the *Hegira*, the commencement of the Mahomedan era. July is generally the hottest month in the year; although the sun shines upon us less and less every day, we feel the effects of the air and land having been so thoroughly warmed. Myriads of insects appear, even in our temperate climate, and thunderstorms are frequent. July is not so rich in flowers as May and June, though it has many peculiar to itself, notably the water-lily and the wild-thyme, scarlet poppies, blue bells, wild carrot, and thistles. Salmon-fishing goes on extensively in the north of England, and in Scotland, and mackerel and pilchards abound off our coasts. Tadpoles turn into frogs, poultry lose their feathers, the ants give birth to new colonies, and bees begin to kill the drones. Wild fruits, such as whinberries, cranberries, and bilberries, ripen abundantly, and mushrooms appear in the pastures. Potato-fields are in full flower, and the beauty of the hop grounds is unrivalled, from the bright green of their foliage, and the graceful bunches of the pendent blossoms.

### July 1.

*Wild-thyme and eglantine perfume the wayside.*

I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,  
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows,  
Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,  
With sweet musk-roses and with eglantine :

SHAKSPERE. *Midsummer Night's Dream*  
Act ii. Sc. 2.

The sun shines hot ; and if we do delay,  
Cold biting winter mars our hoped-for hay.

3rd part of *K. Henry VI.*, Act iv. Sc.  
1564-1616

### July 2.

*Meadow grass in perfection.*

The haughty sun of June had walk'd long days  
Through the tall pastures, which, like mendicants,  
Hung their sere heads and sued for rain : and he  
Had thrown them none. And now it was high hay-time  
Through the sweet valley all the flowery wealth  
At once lay low ;

\* \* \* \* \*

And through the land the incense went that night,  
Through the hush'd holy land, while tired men slept.

SYDNEY DOBELL. 1824-1875

### July 3.

*Meadow grass mown.*

Forth hies the mower with his glittering scythe,  
He moves athwart the mead with sideling bend,  
And lays the grass in many a swathy line :  
In every field, in every lawn and mead.  
The rousing voice of industry is heard :  
The haycock rises, and the frequent rake  
Gathers the fragrant hay in heavy wreaths.  
The old and young, the weak and strong are there,  
And, as they can, help on the cheerful work.

JOANNA BAILLIE. 1762-1851

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## July 4.

*Noonday heat.*

Then came hot July, boyling like to fire,  
That all his garments he had cast away.  
Behind his back a scythe, and by his side  
Under his belt he bore a sickle circling wide.

SPENSER. 1553-1599

The cricket on the bank is dumb  
The very flies forget to hum ;  
And, save the wagon rocking round,  
The landscape sleeps without a sound.

CLARE. 1793-1864

The spreading mists at eve convey  
More fresh the fumes of new-shorn hay.

WARTON. 1728-1790

## July 5.

*Chestnut blossoms fall.*

For me the soft descent of chestnut flowers ;  
The cushat's cry for me :  
The lovely laugther of the wind-sway'd wheat,  
The easy slope of yonder pastoral hill :  
The sedgy brook whereby the red kine meet  
And wade and drink their fill.

JEAN INGELOW.

## July 6.

*Noon-day rest in the hay-field.*

The mowers jest and laugh away their toil  
Till the bright sun, now past his middle course,  
Shoots down his fiercest beams which none may brave.  
The stoutest arm hangs listless, and the swart  
And brawny-shoulder'd clown begins to fail.  
But to the weary, lo—there comes relief !  
A troop of welcome children come, who bear  
In baskets, oaten cakes or barley scones,  
*And gusty cheese, and stoups of milk or whey ;*  
*Beneath the branches of a spreading tree.*

JOANNA BAILEY. 1762-1851

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### July 7.

*Willow-herb blossoms by streams.*

By the rushy fringed bank  
Where grows the willow and the osier dank  
Thick set with agate and the azurn sheen  
Of turkois blue and emerald green,  
That in the channel strays.

MILTON.

Where the copse-wood is the greenest,  
Where the fountain glistens sheenest,  
Where the morning-dew lies longest,  
There the Lady-fern grows strongest.

SIR WALTER SCOTT. 1771-1832

### July 8.

*Lime-trees in flower. Sunflowers in perfection.*

Amid the thousand blossoms of the lime,  
The gossip bees go humming to and fro ;  
And oh, the busy joy of working time !  
And oh ! the fragrance when the limetrees blow !

\* \* \* \* \*

Store, happy bees, these honeys for the frost,  
That sweetness of the blossom be not lost.

AUGUSTA WEBSTER.

### July 9.

*Cuckoo departs.*

Soon as the pea puts on the bloom,  
Thou fliest the woodland vale,  
An annual guest in other lands,  
Another Spring to hail.

Sweet bird ! thy bower is ever green,  
Thy sky is ever clear :  
Thou hast no sorrow in thy song,  
No winter in thy year.

LOGAN. 1748-1788

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## July 10.

*Sweet peas in blossom.*

Open afresh your round of starry folds,  
Ye ardent marigolds !  
Here are sweet peas, on tiptoe for a flight :  
With wings of gentle flush o'er delicate white,  
And taper fingers catching at all things,  
To bind them all about with tiny rings.

KEATS. 1796-1821

The fields are fragrant, and the woods are green.

SHAKSPERE. *Titus Andronicus*, Act ii. Sc. 2.  
1564-1616

## July 11.

*White water-lilies flower.*

And nearer to the river's trembling edge  
There grew broad flag-flowers, purple prankt with white  
And starry river-buds among the sedge,  
And floating water-lilies, broad and bright,  
Which lit the oak that overhung the hedge  
With moonlit beams of their own watery light ;  
And bulrushes, and reeds of such deep green  
As soothed the dazzled eye with sober sheen.

SHELLEY. 1792-1822

## July 12.

*Purple lavender in flower.*

Here's flowers for you ;  
Hot lavender, mints, savory, marjoram ;  
The marigold that goes to bed wi' the sun  
And with him rises weeping ; these are flowers  
Of middle summer . . Bold oxlips and  
The crown imperial ; lilies of all kinds,  
The flower-de-luce being one !  
To make you garlands of.

SHAKSPERE. *Winter's Tale*, Act v. Sc.  
1564-1616

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### July 13.

*Woods in full summer foliage.*

Rose, as in dance, the stately trees and spread  
Their branches, hung with copious fruit, or gemm'd  
With blossoms ; with high woods the hills were crown'd,  
With tufts the valleys, and each fountain-side ;  
With borders long the rivers, that Earth now  
Seem'd like to Heaven, a seat where Gods might dwell  
Or wander, with delight, and love to haunt  
Her sacred shades.

MILTON. 1608-1674

### July 14.

*Camomile in flower.*

Behold the blossom, and the bee,  
Behold their joy,—so comfort thee ! . . .  
Then I admired and took my part  
With crowds of happy things the while :  
With open velvet butterflies,  
That swung, and spread their peacock eyes,  
As if they cared no more to rise  
From off their beds of camomile.

JEAN INGELOW.

### July 15.

*St. Swithin's day.*

THE RAINBOW.

Still young and fine ! But what is e'er in view  
We slight, as old and soil'd, though fresh and new.  
Where Thou dost shine, darkness looks white and fair,  
Storms turn to music, clouds to smiles and air.  
Bright pledge of peace and sunshine ! The sure tie  
Of thy Lord's hand, the object of His eye !  
When I behold thee, though my light be dim,  
*Distant and low, I can in thine see Him.*

HENRY VAUGHAN. 1621-1695

*Born of the shower and colour'd by the sun.*

THOMSON. 1699-1748

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## July 16.

*Sweet briar fragrant after rain.*

From this bleeding hand of mine  
Take this sprig of Eglantine ;  
Which though sweet unto your smell,  
Yet, the fretful briar will tell  
He who plucks the sweets shall prove  
Many thorns to be in love.

HERRICK. 1591-1674

The thorns I've reaped are of the tree  
I planted ; they have torn me, and I bleed :  
I should have known what fruit would spring from such a seed  
LORD BYRON. 1788-1824

## July 17.

*Calm after a storm.*

Calm was the evening,—if the beech wood stirr'd,  
'Twas with the nestling of the grey-wing'd bird ;  
Midst its thick leaves ; and though the nightingale  
Her ancient, hapless sorrow must bewail,  
No more of woe there seemèd in her song  
Than such as doth to lovers' words belong.  
Because their love is still unsatisfied.

W.M. MORRIS.

## July 18.

*Corn-crake heard night and morning.*

I muse at eve in meadows newly mown,  
Where withering grass perfumes the sultry air ;  
Where bees search round with sad and weary drone  
In vain for flowers that bloom'd but lately there ;  
While in the juicy corn the hidden quail  
Cries "wet my foot," and, hid as thoughts unborn,  
The fairy-like and seldom seen landrail  
Utters "craik—craik," like voices underground,  
*Right glad to meet the evening's dewy veil,*  
*And mark the light fade into gloom around.*  
CLARE. 1793-1864

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### July 19.

*Poppies appear with the green corn.*

By a cornfield-side a-flutter with poppies—  
Hark ! those two in the hazel coppice . . .

Let them pass, as they will too soon,  
With the bean-flower's boon  
And the black-bird's tune  
And May, and June !

ROBT. BROWNING.

### July 20.

*Bees gather about late-blooming lilies.*

Fair was the morn to-day, the blossom's scent  
Floated across the fresh grass, and the bees  
With low vext song from rose to lily went.

A gentle wind was in the heavy trees,  
And thine eyes shone with joyous memories.

WM. MORRIS.

Go to the bee ! and thence bring home,  
(Worth all the treasures of her comb)

An antidote against rash strife ;  
She, when her angry flight she wings,  
But once, and at her peril, stings ;  
But gathers honey, all her life.

BISHOP. 1780-1855

### July 21.

*Scarlet pimpernel flowers.*

The scarlet pimpernel peeps here and there,  
Amid the corn the crimson poppies blush  
Still on the brooks gleam water-lilies rare,  
And purple loosestrife, and the flowering rush.

The blue campanula, the chicory wild,  
And yellow toad-flax, variegate the plain ;  
*And with a thankful heart and sense beguiled*  
*We look upon the fields of ripening grain.*

H. G. ADAMS.

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### July 22.

*St. Mary Magdalen's day. Thistle blossoms.*

Duty, like a strict preceptor,  
Sometimes frowns, or seems to frown ;  
Choose her thistle for thy sceptre,  
While youth's roses are thy crown.

Grasp it,—if thou shrink and tremble,  
Fairest damsel of the green,  
Thou wilt lack the only symbol  
That proclaims a genuine queen.

WORDSWORTH. 1770-1850

### July 23.

*Bee and fly-orchis plentiful in South-Eastern counties.*

#### THE BEAUTY OF ENGLAND.

I learn'd to love it—such an up and down  
Of verdure,—nothing too much up or down,—  
A ripple of land ; such little hills, the sky  
Can stoop to tenderly and the wheatfields climb ;  
Such nooks of valleys lined with orchises,  
Fed full of noises by invisible streams.  
And open pastures where you scarcely tell  
White daisies from white dew,—at intervals  
The mythic oaks and elm trees standing out  
Self-poised upon their prodigy of shade.

E. B. BROWNING. (*From "Aurora Leigh."*)  
1809-1861

### July 24.

*Whortleberries and bilberries ripen.*

Oh, haste ! hark ! the shepherd hath waken'd his pipe,  
And led out his lambs where the blaeberry's ripe ;  
The bright sun is tasting the dew on the thyme,  
Yon glad maiden's lilting an old bridal rhyme,  
*There's joy in the heavens and gladness on earth,—*  
*So come to the sunshine and mix in the mirth.*

ALLAN CUNNINGHAM. 1785-1861

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## July 25.

*St. James's day. Dandelion seeds.*

Now watch intently Nature's gentle doings :  
They will be found softer than ringdove's cooings :  
Were I in such a place, I sure should pray  
That nought less sweet might call my thoughts away  
Than the soft rustle of a maiden's gown  
Fanning away the dandelion's down :—  
Than the light music of her nimble toes,  
Patting against the sorrel as she goes.

KEATS. 1796-1821

## July 26.

*St. Anne. Wheat-ears fill.*

Shot up from broad rank blades that droop below,  
The nodding wheat-ear forms a graceful bow,  
With milky kernels starting full, weigh'd down,  
Ere yet the sun has tinged its head with brown ;  
There, thousands in a flock, for ever gay,  
Loud chirping sparrows welcome on the day,  
And, from the mazes of the leafy thorn,  
Drop, one by one, upon the bending corn.

ROBERT BLOOMFIELD. 1766-1823

## July 27.

*Yellow water-lily flowers in pools.*

Ye field flowers ! The gardens eclipse you, 'tis true,  
Yet, wildlings of nature, I doat upon you ;  
For ye waft me to summers of old,  
When the earth teem'd around me with fairy delight,  
And when daisies and buttercups gladden'd my sight,  
Like treasures of silver and gold.

Even now, what affections the violet awakes ;  
What loved little islands, twice seen in their lakes,  
Can the wild water-lily restore ;  
What landscapes I read in the primrose's looks,  
*And what pictures of pebbled and minnowy brooks*  
*In the vetches that tangled their shore.*

CAMPBELL. 1771-1844

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July 28.

*Grasshoppers chirp.*

The poetry of earth is never dead ;  
When all the birds are faint with the hot sun  
And hide in cooling trees, a voice will run  
From hedge to hedge about the new-mown mead :  
That is the grasshopper's—

KEATS. 1796-1821

July 29.

*Poppies adorn the waste lands.*

—Lo, where the heath with withering brake grown o'er  
Lends the light turf that warms the neighbouring poor :  
There poppies nodding mock the hope of toil,  
There the blue bugloss paints the sterile soil.  
Hardy and high, above the slender sheaf,  
The slimy mallow waves her silky leaf.  
O'er the young shoot the charlock throws a shade,  
And clasping tares climb round the sickly blade.

CRABBE. 1754-1832

July 30.

*Sundew (insect-eating plant) may be found on undrained lands.*

Here pits of crag, with spongy plashy base,  
For some enrich the uncultivated space—  
For here are blossoms rare, and curious rush,  
The gale's rich balm, and sundew's crimson blush,  
*Whose velvet leaf, with radiant beauty drest,*  
*Forms a gay pillow for the plover's breast.*

CRABBE. 1754-1832

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**July 31.**

*Flowering-rush and water-arrowhead flower.*

. . . . . Stand at the water's brink,  
And shoals of spotted barbel you shall see  
Basking between the shadows—look, and think  
“This beauty is for me ;

“For me this freshness in the morning hours,  
For me the water's clear tranquillity :  
For me the soft descent of chestnut flowers ;  
The cushat's cry for me.

The lovely laughter of the wind-sway'd wheat,  
The easy slope of yonder pastoral hill ;  
The sedgy brook whereby the red kine meet  
And wade and drink their fill.”

**JEAN INGELOW.**

Where the streamlet's voice grew fainter,  
And its pace less fleet,  
Just as though it loved to linger  
Round the rushes' feet :

Purple willow-herb bent over  
To her shadow fair,  
Meadow-sweet, in feathery clusters,  
Perfumed all the air.

**A. A. PROCTER.**

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*SUNSET GLORY.*

*AN EVENING VOLUNTARY.*

*Far-distant images draw nigh,  
Call'd forth by wondrous potency  
Of beamy radiance, that imbues  
Whate'er it strikes with gem-like hues !  
In vision exquisitely clear,  
Herds range along the mountain-side ;  
And glistening antlers are descried ;  
And gilded flocks appear.  
Thine is the tranquil hour, purpureal Eve !  
But long as god-like wish, or hope divine,  
Informs my spirit, ne'er can I believe  
That this magnificence is wholly thine !  
—From worlds not quicken'd by the sun  
A portion of the gift is won ;  
An intermingling of Heaven's pomp is spread  
On ground which British shepherds tread !*

*WORDSWORTH, 1818.*



## August.

THIS month has its present name from *Augustus* Cæsar, before whose time it was called *Sextilis*. The Romans dedicated it to Ceres, the goddess of corn. The 1st of *August* is called *Lammas-day*, from a custom which formerly prevailed of offering two young lambs at the altars of cathedrals, from whose wool was manufactured the *pallium* or sacred robe sent by the Pope to those whom he promoted to Church dignities. The 6th is kept as a festival in the Greek and Roman churches in remembrance of the *Transfiguration of our Lord*. The 24th *August*, *St. Bartholomew's day*, is memorable for a frightful massacre of Protestants that took place at its recurrence in the year 1572 in France.

This month is generally dry, and propitious for the ripening of corn and fruit, and would be very sultry but for the beautiful provision of copious dews. It is the month of hop-harvest, followed in succession by the harvest of rye, oats, wheat, and barley. Peas and beans also ripen for the cattle. Though many of the wild flowers are gone, the heaths and ferns are in perfection, and afford shelter to many birds and small quadrupeds; whilst the dewy nights revive the country and appear to give it a second spring.

This is the mutest month since early spring, but at its close the robin, having reared its young, resumes its song, while the swallows and martins fly about, morning and evening, in large flocks, as if exercising their wings; the largest of the swallow family, the swift, leaving us about the middle of the month. The dog-days mostly occur in this month, when Sirius, the dog-star, rises and sets with the sun.

### August 1.

*Lammas day.*

Rustle the breezes lightly borne  
O'er deep embattled ears of corn :  
Round ancient elm, with humming noise,  
Full loud the chaffer-swarms rejoice.  
Meantime, a thousand dyes invest  
The ruby chambers of the west !

WARTON. 1728-1790

The valleys also stand so thick with corn  
That they shall laugh and sing.

*Psalms of David, lxv. 13.*

### August 2.

*Moors purple with heather-bloom.*

The leagues of heather lie on moor and hill,  
And make soft purple dimness and red glow ;  
No butterfly may call the blithe wind chill  
That brings the ruddy heather-bells ablow.  
The song-birds half forget the world is fair,  
Nor pipe glad lays because the heather's there :  
Oh foolish birds, that have no joyous lay,  
With hill and moor a garden-ground to-day !

AUGUSTA WEBSTER.

### August 3.

*Bramble-berries reddens.*

The primrose to the grave is gone ;  
The hawthorn flower is dead,  
The violet by the moss'd grey stone  
Has laid her weary head ;  
But thou, wild bramble ! back dost bring,  
In all their beauteous power,  
The fresh green days of life's fair spring,  
And boyhood's blossoming hour.

EBENEZER ELLIOT. 1781-1849

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## August 4.

*Beech-nuts ripe.*

No tree in all the grove but has its charms,  
Some glossy-leaved and shining in the sun,  
The maple, and the beech of oily nuts  
Peculiar, and the lime at dewy eve  
Diffusing odours : not unsoiled pass  
The sycamore, capricious in attire,  
Now green, now tawny, and, ere autumn yet  
Have changed the woods, in scarlet vesture bright.

COWPER. 1731-1800

## August 5.

*Summer apples ripe.*

—A mill upon the river's brim,  
That seem'd a goodly place to him,  
For o'er the oily smooth millhead  
There hung the apples growing red,  
And many an ancient apple-tree  
Within the orchard he could see.

WM. MORRIS.

Pleasant to the eye, and good for food,  
*Holy Bible. Gen. ii. 9.*

## August 6.

*Feast of the Transfiguration.*

SUMMER SUNSHINE.

I look'd on the peasant's lowly cot,  
Something of sadness had veil'd the spot,  
But a glance from thee on the lattice fell,  
And it laugh'd into beauty at that bright spell.

Sunbeam of Summer, oh what is like thee ?

Hope in the wilderness ? joy on the sea ?

*One thing is like thee, to mortals given,*

—The Faith gilding all things with hues of heaven.  
FELICIA HEMANS. 1794-1835

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### August 7.

*Apricots and peaches ripe.*

Now came fulfilment of the year's desire,  
The tall wheat, colour'd by the August fire,  
Grew heavy-headed, dreading its decay,  
And blacker grew the elm-trees day by day.  
With peach and apricots the garden-wall  
Was odorous and the pears began to fall.

WM. MORRIS.

Kisses soft and warm  
As those the sun prints on the dainty cheek  
Of plums or mellow peaches.

BRAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

*The Faithful Shepherd.* 1556-1616

### August 8.

*The barley whitens.*

Plumy barley whitens now,  
On the upland's smiling brow ;  
Oats their waving locks unfold,  
And early rye is tinged with gold,  
And a browner shade appears  
On the full wheat's bending ears.

AGNES STRICKLAND.

### August 9.

*Poppies and cornflowers blossom.*

What gorgeous tints prevail  
As ripening harvest rustles in the gale !  
A glorious sight, if glory dwells below,  
Where Heaven's magnificence makes all things glow,—  
O'er every field a glowing prospect's found,  
Where the charm'd gazer looks delighted round,  
Whilst here the veriest clown that treads the sod  
Without one scruple gives the praise to God !

BLOOMFIELD. 1766-1823

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## August 10.

*Grass becomes parched.*

Yellow the cornfields lay, although as yet  
Unto the stalks no sickle had been set ;  
The lark sung over them, the butterfly  
Flicker'd from ear to ear distractedly,—

\* \* \* \* \*

Along the road the trembling poppies shed  
On the burnt grass their crumpled leaves and red.

W. MORRIS.

For pleasures are like poppies spread,  
You seize the flower,—its bloom is shed.

R. BURNS. 1759-1796

## August 11.

*Wild thyme in flower.*

Nor lacks there fragrance to dispense  
Refreshment o'er my soothèd sense ;  
Nor tangled woodbine's balmy bloom,

\* \* \* \* \*

Nor lurking wild-thyme's spicy sweet  
To bathe in dew my roving feet :

WARTON. 1728-1790

Fall on me like the silent dew,  
Or like those maiden showers,  
Which by the peep of day do strew  
A baptism o'er the flowers.

HERRICK. 1591-1674

## August 12.

*Hawthorn-berries ripen.*

The moor-cock springs on whirring wings  
Among the blooming heather.  
Come let us stray our gladsome way  
And view the charms of nature,  
The rustling corn, the fruited thorn,  
And every happy creature.

BURNS. 1759-1796

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### August 13.

*Flowers adorn the cornfield. Old Lemmings day.*

Hence we'll pause and gather a glorious wreath  
From the flowers that are shelter'd the corn beneath :  
These are velvet campions, both white and red,  
And poppies, like morning glories spread,  
That flush and glance, with their scarlet sheen,  
The bending ears of the corn between :  
And the lowly bind with its delicate tinge,  
And the azure succory's silken fringe,  
The modest scabious, of meeker hue,  
And silvery galium of virgin hue ;  
The gay flaxlin, and ox-eye bold,  
And their gaudy neighbour the marigold.

AGNES STRICKLAND.

### August 14.

*Swallows fly night and morning.*

True hope is swift, and flies with swallows' wings :  
Kings it makes gods, and meaner creatures kings.

SHAKSPERE. *K. Richard III.*, Act v. Sc. 2  
1564-1616

When Autumn's yellow lustre gilds the land.

THOMSON. 1699-1748

### August 15.

*Swifts depart. (The largest of our swallows.)*

The swallows went last week, but 'twas too soon,  
For, see the sunbeams streaming on their eaves ;  
And look, my rose, a very child of June,  
Spreading its crimson coronet of leaves.

AUGUSTA WEBSTER.

Mortals, rejoice ! the very Angels quit  
Their mansions : unsusceptible of change,  
*Amid your pleasant bowers to sit,*  
*And through your sweet vicissitudes to range !*

WORDSWORTH. 1770-1850

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### August 16.

*Young broods of the goldfinch appear.*

While ripening corn grew thick and deep,  
And here and there men stood to reap,  
One morn I put my heart to sleep,  
    And to the lanes I took my way.  
The goldfinch on a thistle-head  
Stood scattering seedlets as she fed ;  
The wrens their pretty gossip spread,  
Or join'd a random roundelay.

Jean Ingelow.

### August 17.

*Blackberries ripe.*

So tall along the dusty highway row,  
So wide on the free heath the brambles spread ;  
Here's the pink bud, and here the full white blow,  
And here the black ripe berry, here the red.  
Bud, flower, and fruit, among the mingling thorns :  
And dews to feed them in the Autumn morns :  
Fruit, flower, and bud, together, thou rich tree !  
And oh ! but life's a happy time for me !

AUGUSTA WEBSTER.

### August 18.

*Mists at sunset.*

How pleasant, as the sun declines, to view  
The spacious landscape change in form and hue !  
Here vanish, as in mists, before a flood  
Of bright obscurity, hill, lawn, and wood ;  
There, objects, by the searching beams betray'd,  
Come forth, and here retire in purple shade ;  
*Even the white stems of birch, the cottage white,*  
*Softens their glare before the mellow light.*

WORDSWORTH. 1770-1850

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**August 19.**

*Barley-mowing.*

Rest here awhile, not yet the eve is still,  
The bees are wandering yet, and you may hear  
The barley-mowers on the trenched hill,  
The sheep-bells, and the restless changing weir,  
All little sounds made musical and clear  
Beneath the sky that burning August gives,  
While yet the thought of glorious Summer lives.

W.M. MORRIS.

**August 20.**

*Copious dew temper the heat.*

**A DROP OF DEW.**

See how the orient dew,  
Shed, from the bosom of the morn,  
Into the blowing roses,  
Yet careless of its mansion new,  
For the clear region where 'twas born  
Round in itself incloses !  
Scarce touching where it lies,  
Till the warm sun pities its pain,  
And to the skies exhales it back again.

ANDREW MARVELL. 1620-1678

**August 21.**

*Tares grow up with the wheat.*

See yonder field with golden plenty bending,  
As swept by summer airs ;  
Amongst the rustling ears too closely blending  
Are rank and wasteful tares !  
Such is our life ; our best and purest pleasures  
Are mix'd with sad alloy,  
And few among the soul's most cherish'd treasures  
But yield both grief and joy.

H. GOODWIN.

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### August 22.

*Purple foxglove sheds its blossoms.*

When the foxglove, one by one,  
Upwards through every stage of the tall stem  
Had shed beside the public way its bells,  
And stood of all dismantled. Save the last  
Left at the tapering ladder's top, that seem'd  
To bend, as doth a slender blade of grass  
Tipped with its raindrop.

WORDSWORTH. 1770-1850

### August 23.

*Corn cut. Balsam flowers.*

Here, 'midst the boldest triumphs of her worth,  
Nature herself invites the reapers forth.  
Hark ! where the sweeping scythe now rips along,  
Each sturdy mower, emulous and strong,  
Whose writhing form meridian heat defies,  
Bends o'er his work, and every sinew tries ;  
Prostrates the waving treasure at his feet,  
But spears the rising clover, short and sweet.

BLOOMFIELD. 1766-1823

### August 24.

*St. Bartholomew's day.*

Thousands are round us, toiling as we,  
Living and loving,—whose lot is to be  
Pass'd and forgotten, like waves of the sea.  
Be we content then to pass into shade,  
Visage and voice in oblivion laid,  
And live in the light that our actions have made.

DEAN ALFORD.

From me is thy fruit found.

Holy Bible. Hosea xiv. 8.

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### August 25.

#### *Apricots ripe.*

With peach and apricot the garden wall  
Was odorous, and the pears began to fall.  
The sun went down, the harvest-noon arose  
They saw the corn still falling 'neath its light,  
While through the soft air of the windless night  
The voices of the reapers, mates rang clear,  
In measured song, as of the fruitful year  
They told, and its delights.

W.M. MORRIS.

### August 26.

#### *Mulberries ripe.*

For us the winds do blow,  
The earth doth rest, heaven move, and fountains flow:  
Nothing we see but means our good,  
As our delight or as our treasure:  
The whole is either our cupboard of food  
Or cabinet of pleasure.  
Oh mighty love! Man is one world, and hath  
Another to attend him.

GEORGE HERBERT. 1593-1632

### August 27.

#### *Wheat-harvest progresses.*

Then 'twixt the flowery hedges sweet  
He heard the hook smite down the wheat,  
And murmur of the unseen folk:  
But when he reach'd the stream that broke  
The golden plain, but leisurely  
He pass'd the bridge, for he could see  
The masters of that ripening realm,  
Cast down beneath an ancient elm  
Upon a little strip of grass,  
*From hand to hand the pitcher pass,*  
*While on the turf beside them lay*  
*Their ashen-handled sickles grey.*

W.M. MORRIS.

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### August 28.

*Corn is carried, here and there.*

When Earth repays with golden sheaves  
The labours of the plough,  
And ripening fruits and forest-leaves  
All brighten on the bough ;  
What pensive beauty Autumn shows,  
Before she hears the sound  
Of Winter, rushing in, to close  
The emblematic round.

WORDSWORTH. 1770-1850

### August 29.

*"Dog-star heat" prevails.*

Our veiled dames  
Commit the war of white and damask,  
In their nicely gauded cheeks, to the wanton spoil  
Of Phœbus' burning kisses.

SHAKSPERE. *Coriolanus*, Act ii. Sc. 1.  
1564-1616

So the blue bindweed doth itself enfold  
With honeysuckle ; and both these entwine  
Themselves with briony and jessamine,  
To cast a kind and odoriferous shade.

BEN JONSON. 1573-1637

### August 30.

*Summer's appointed task completed.*

No more shall meads be deck'd with flowers,  
Nor sweetness dwell in rosy bowers ;  
Nor greenest buds on branches spring,  
Nor warbling birds delight to sing.

THOMAS CAREW. 1580-1639

Music, when soft voices die,  
Vibrates in the memory,—  
Rose-leaves, when the rose is dead.  
Are heap'd for the beloved's bed ;  
And so thy thoughts, when thou art gone,  
Love itself shall slumber on.

SHELLEY. 1792-1822

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August 31.

*The robin resumes its song.*

The bird that loveth humans best,  
That hath the bogle eyes and rosy breast,  
And is the yellow Autumn's nightingale.

CHAPMAN. 1557-1634

They joy before Thee, as the joy of Harvest.

*Holy Bible. Prophet Isaïah, ix. 3.*

Thou shalt hear

Distant harvest-carols clear,  
Rustle of the reaped corn,  
Sweet birds antheming the morn,  
Acorns ripe down patterning,  
While the Autumn breezes sing.

KEATS. 1796-1821

Then came the Autumn, all in yellow clad  
As though he joyed in his plenteous store,  
Laden with fruits that made him laugh, full glad—  
Upon his head a wreath of corn he bore,  
And in his hand a sickle he did hold,  
To reap the ripen'd fruits the which the earth had yold.

SPENSER. 1553-1599

For out of the old fieldes, as men saithe,  
Cometh al this new corne fro yere to yere,  
And out of old booke, in good faithe,  
Cometh al this new science that men lere.

CHAUCER. 1328-1400

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*There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,  
The earth, and every common sight,  
To me did seem  
Apparell'd in celestial light,  
The glory and the freshness of a dream.  
It is not now as it hath been of yore :—  
Turn whereso'er I may,  
By night or day,  
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.*

\* \* \* \* \*

*What though the radiance which was once so bright  
Be now forever taken from my sight !  
Though nothing can bring back the hour  
Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower :  
We will grieve not, rather find  
Strength in what remains behind ;  
In the primal sympathy  
Which having been must ever be ;  
In the soothing thoughts that spring  
Out of human suffering ;  
In the faith that looks through death,  
In years that bring the philosophic mind.*

WORDSWORTH, 1806.



## September.

THIS month received its name when the year began in March, and was called so by the Romans as being seventh from the beginning of the year. The termination *ember* or *imber*, meaning a shower, points to the wet season about to commence. Our Saxon ancestors called it *Gerst-Monat*, or Barley-month, on account of the ripening of the grain so much cultivated by them for making their common drink, called *ael* and afterwards *beere*.

The 23rd of this month is the Autumnal Equinox, when days and nights are of equal length, a point typified by the Zodiacal Sign of *Libra* or The Balance, as if day and night had been weighed and impartially divided. The full-moon which comes nearest to the time when the sun enters *Libra* is called the Harvest-Moon, and is of great benefit in lengthening the available hours for getting in the fruits of the earth. It is also the time when heavy rain falls, and storms of wind prevail that are called *the Equinoctial gales*.

The days set apart for special observance in this month are the 21st, in memory of *St. Matthew*, and the 29th, which was appointed in the year 487 to be kept as the festival of *St. Michael and All Angels*. It is the 3rd Quarter-day in the year, and is still very often called by the old name of *Martinmas*, which was formerly kept as the third Quarter-day of the oldest Roman Calendar.

September is the first autumn month, marked by a general migration of the birds of passage—even domestic and caged birds, who have now no need to wander in search of food, being restless, as if preparing for flight. Persons living in Gibraltar may see them hastening above the surface of the Mediterranean to the coast of Africa for the winter. Some birds only migrate as far as the southern counties. As soon

the insect-eating birds have left us, their place is filled by troops of fieldfares and others, which devour the hips and haws and other berries in our hedgerows. Woodcocks search for insects in their winter haunts of old trees, and snipes, curlews, and wild geese feed in stubble fields and moist ditches. Many of our native birds renew their songs, especially the thrush, blackbird, woodlark, and redbreast.

The stone-curlew repeats his call, and the wood-owl his nightly hoot ; while solitary birds, such as plovers, sparrows, linnets and larks, become social, and fly in parties from field to field in search of food. Butterflies sport about in great numbers, crickets and beetles abound, and flies and wasps invade the shelter of our houses. Several kinds of lady-birds appear, and do us good service by devouring the aphis, which produces honey-dew.

The spiders, both *geometric* and *gossamer*, are very numerous, and the glow-worm shines with added brilliancy. Hazel nuts and walnuts are fit for gathering, and chestnuts, which are much prized as winter food for deer. The oaks furnish food for swine by shedding their acorns, apples (first generally planted in the time of Charles the First) are gathered in for winter use, and cider-making begins ; and the fields of autumn crocus are stripped for saffron. The fields are no sooner cleared of the corn than they are ploughed up for autumn sowing or for winter fallows.

The decaying woods become brilliant with the rich tints of autumn, and the heaths are golden with the prickly furze ;—which is the only instance of a native shrub having thorns for leaves.



### September 1.

*St. Giles' day. Partridge shooting begins.*  
You sunburnt sicklemen, of August weary,  
Come hither from the furrow, and be merry :  
Make holiday ; your rye-straw hats put on,  
And these fresh nymphs encounter every one,  
In country footing.

SHAKSPERE. *Tempest*, Act iv. Sc. 1.  
1564-1616

We saw the tawny valley, here and there  
Sheaf-dotted fields : a silent string of carts  
Creeping along the whiten'd country road ;  
Contented cottage-smoke ; a shot, and lo !  
Into the sunset the disturbed rooks  
Arose in noisy clouds from trees that kept  
Some great man's house a secret.

ALEX. SMITH. 1830-1867

### September 2.

*Glow-worms shine with added brilliancy.*  
Now on each moss-wove border damp,  
The glow-worm hangs his tiny lamp.

WARTON. 1728-1790

Delighted with the glow-worm's harmless ray,  
Toss'd light from hand to hand ; while on the ground  
Small circles of green radiance gleam around.

WORDSWORTH. 1770-1850

### September 3.

*Many native song birds resume their lays.*

There sat upon the linden-tree  
A bird, and sang its strain ;  
So sweetly sang, that, as I heard,  
My heart went back again.  
It went to one remember'd spot,  
It saw the rose-trees blow,  
And thought again the thoughts of love  
*There* cherish'd long ago.

DIETMAR VON AST. 13th Cent.

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### September 4.

*Apples redder.*

The apple-branches bend with ripening weight.—  
The apple-branches rosy as with flowers ;  
You'd think red giant fuchsias blooming late  
Within this sunny orchard-ground of ours.  
Give us your shade, fair fountain-trees of fruits ;  
We rest upon the mosses at your roots :  
Fair fountain trees of fruits, drop windfalls here ;  
Lo, ripening store for all the coming year.

AUGUSTA WEBSTER.

### September 5.

*The hock-cart, horkey, or harvest home.*

Come, sons of summer, by whose toil  
We are the lords of wine and oil ;  
By whose tough labour and rough hands  
We rip up first, then reap, our lands :  
Crown'd with the ears of corn now come,  
And, to the pipe, sing harvest-home ;  
Come forth, my lord, and see the cart,  
Drest up with all the country art . . . .  
Some bless the cart, some kiss the sheaves,  
Some prank them up with oaken leaves.

HERRICK. 1591-1674

### September 6.

*Apples are gathered.*

Mid young September's fruit-trees next they met.

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The level ground along the river-side  
Was merry through the day with sound of those  
Who gather'd apples.—Vine-stocks, row on row—  
Their dusty leaves, well-thinn'd and yellowing now,  
But little hid the bright-bloom'd bunches.

W. MORRIS.

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### September 7.

*Butterflies sport in great numbers.*

Oh ! pleasant, pleasant were the days  
The time when, in our childish plays,  
My sister Esmeline and I  
Together chased the butterfly !  
A very hunter I did rush  
Upon the prey ;—with leaps and springs  
I follow'd on from brake to bush ;  
But she, God love her ! fear'd to brush  
The dust from off its wings.

WORDSWORTH. 1770-1850

### September 8.

*Birds of passage congregate.*

From out the dim grey sky  
The arrowy swarm breaks forth and specks the air,  
While, one by one, birds wheel, and float, and fly,  
And now are gone, then suddenly are there :  
Till lo ! the heavens are empty of them all :  
Oh ! fly, fly south, from leaves that fade and fall,  
From shivering flowers that die :  
Free swallows, fly from winter's thrall,  
Ye who can give the gloom good-bye.

AUGUSTA WEBSTER.

### September 9.

*Robin sings.*

The morning mist is clear'd a way.  
Yet still the face of heaven is grey,  
Nor yet the autumnal breeze has stirr'd the grove,  
Faded, yet full, a paler green  
Skirts soberly the tranquil scene ;  
The redbreast warbles in his leafy cove.  
Sweet messenger of calm decay,  
Saluting sorrow as you may,  
In thee, and in this quiet mead,  
The lesson of sweet peace I read.

KEBLE. 1792-1856

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## September 10.

*Grapes change colour.*

They led the vine

To wed the elm ; she, spoused, about him twines  
Her marriageable arms, and with her brings  
Her dower, the adopted clusters to adorn  
His barren leaves.

MILTON. 1608-1674

Swift summer into the autumn flow'd,  
And frost in the mist of the morning rode,  
Though the noonday-sun look'd clear and bright,  
Mocking the spoil of the secret night.

SHELLEY. 1792-1822

## September 11.

*Wood-owls hoot.*

In the hollow tree, or the grey old tower,  
The spectral owl doth dwell,—  
Dull, hated, despised in the sunshine hour,—  
But at dusk he's abroad and well.

Yet mourn not the lone owl's gloomy plight,  
The owl has its share of good :  
If a prisoner he be in the broad daylight,  
He is lord in the darkening wood.

Not lonely the bird, nor his hooting mate,  
They are each unto each a pride,—  
Thrice fonder perhaps, for the strange dark fate  
That has rent them from all beside.

BARRY CORNWALL.

## September 12.

*Moon rises with a sunset glow.*

Autumn's evening meets me soon,  
Leading the infantine moon.  
Half the crimson light she brings  
From the sunset's radiance springs.

SHELLEY. 1792-1822

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### September 13.

*Swine are driven to the stubble-fields.*

The old men sat and heard the swineherd's horn  
Far off across the stubble, when the day  
At end of harvest-tide was sad and grey ;  
And rain was in the wind's voice as it swept  
Along the hedges where the lone quail crept :  
Beneath the chattering of the restless pie.  
The fruit-hung branches moved, and suddenly  
The trembling apples smote the dewy grass,  
And all the year to Autumn-tide did pass.

WM. MORRIS.

### September 14.

*Ghost-moth appears, and saffron-butterfly.*

The low sun stares through dust of gold,  
And o'er the darkening heath and wold  
The large ghost-moth doth flit.

ALEX. SMITH. 1830-1861

The bee goes booming through the plats of flowers,  
The butterfly its tiny mate pursues  
With rapid fluttering of its painted hues,  
The thin-winged gnats their transient time employ  
Reeling through sunbeams in a dance of joy.

HON. MRS. NORTON.  
*From the Lady of Garay.*

### September 15.

*General migration of birds of passage.*

Ah ! swallows, is it so ?  
Did loving, lingering summer, whose slow pace

Tarried among late blossoms, loth to go,  
Gather the darkening cloud-wraps round her face,

And weep herself away in last week's rain ?

Can no new sunlight waken her again ?

"Yes !" one pale rose a-blow

Has answer'd from the trellised lane ;

*The flickering swallows answer "No."*

AUGUSTA WEBSTER

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### September 16.

*Heavy rains and frequent rainbows at this season.*

My heart leaps up when I behold

A rainbow in the sky :

So was it when my life began ;

So is it now I am a man ;

So be it when I shall grow old,

Or let me die !

The child is father to the man ;

And I could wish my days to be

Bound each to each by natural piety.

WORDSWORTH. 1770-1850

### September 17.

*Numerous butterflies sport about the blossoming furz.*

On me such bounty summer showers

That I am cover'd o'er with flowers—

Even when frost is in the sky

My branches are so fresh and gay

That you might look on me and say

This plant can never die.

The butterfly, all green and gold,

To me hath often flown,

Here in my blossoms to behold

Wings lovely as his own.

WORDSWORTH.

When Furze is not in blossom, kissing's not in fashion.

*Old Saying.*

### September 18.

*Walnuts and chestnuts fit for gathering.*

Earth's increase, foison plenty,

Barns and garners never empty ;

Vines, with clustering bunches growing,

Plants with goodly burthen bowing ;

Spring come to you, at the farthest,

In the very end of harvest !

SHAKSPERE. *Tempest, Act iv. Sc.  
1564-1616*

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## September 19.

*Equinoctial gales looked for.*

### THE WIND.

It curls the blue waves into foam,  
It snaps the strongest mast,  
Then, like a sorrowing thing, it sighs,  
When the wild storm is past.  
How gently does it sometimes come  
At evening to our bowers ;  
As if it said a kind good-night  
To all the closing flowers.  
It fans the reapers' heated brows—  
To prince, to peasant given,  
Awake, asleep, around us still  
There's this free gift of heaven.

E. HAWKSHAW.

## September 20.

*Beech turns yellow.*

Best I love September's yellow ;  
Morns of dew-strung gossamer,  
Thoughtful days without a stir,  
Rook'y clamours, brazen leaves,  
Stubbles dotted o'er with sheaves,—  
More than Spring's bright uncontrol  
Suit the Autumn of my soul.

ALEX. SMITH. 1830-1867

## September 21.

*Festival of St. Matthew.*

—A valley, that beneath the haze  
Of that most fair of autumn days,  
Show'd glorious : fair with golden sheaves,  
Rich with the darken'd autumn-leaves,  
Gay with the water-meadows green,  
The bright blue streams that lay between  
The miles of beauty stretch'd away  
From that bleak hill-side bare and grey,  
Till white cliffs over slopes of vine  
Drew 'gainst the sky a broken line.

Wm. MOR.

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## September 22.

### *Equinoctial gales prevail.*

His praise ye winds, that from four quarters blow,  
Breathe soft or loud ; and wave your tops, ye pines,  
With every plant in sign of worship wave.  
Fountains, and ye that warble as ye flow  
Melodious murmurs, warbling tune his praise.

MILTON. 1608-1674

The green leaves quiver with the cooling wind  
And make a chequered shadow on the ground.

SHAKSPERE. *Titus Andronicus*, Act ii. Sc. 3  
1564-1616

## September 23.

### *The Autumnal Equinox.*

Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,  
And summer's lease hath all too short a date :  
Sometimes too hot the eye of heaven shines,  
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd ;  
And every fair from fair sometimes declines ;  
By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd.

SHAKSPERE. *Sonnet xviii.* 1564-1616

The strawberry grows underneath the nettle.

Ibid. *K. Henry V.*, Act i. Sc. 2.

## September 24.

### *Fly-catcher last seen.*

When the partridge o'er the sheaf  
Whirr'd along the yellow vale,  
Sad I saw thee, heedless leaf !  
Love the dalliance of the gale.  
Gaily from thy mother-stalk  
Wert thou danced and wasted high—  
Soon on this unshelter'd walk  
Flung to fade, to rot, and die.

COLERIDGE. 1772-1834

(Addressed to a Wandering One.)

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### September 25.

*Boisterous weather.*

Blow winds of Autumn ! let your chilling breath  
Take the live herbage from the mead, and strip  
The shady forest of its green attire.  
Your desolating sway saddens me not,  
And no disorder in your rage I find.  
What dignity, what beauty, in this change  
From mild to angry, and from sad to gay !  
How rich in animation and delight !

WORDSWORTH. 1770-1850

### September 26.

*Out-door grapes ripe.*

The grapes upon the vicar's wall  
Were ripe as ripe could be,  
And yellow leaves in sun and rain  
Were falling from the tree.  
On hedge-elms, in the narrow lane,  
Still swung the spikes of corn.

COLERIDGE. 1772-1834

### September 27.

*Autumnal crocus gathered for saffron.*

Long brilliant tubes of purple hue  
The fields in countless myriads strew,  
Anon—but brief the space between—  
No more these countless tubes are seen ;  
The meads their verdant robes resume,  
And with that evanescent bloom  
You deem perhaps its spirit fled,  
Abortive, virtueless, and dead.  
You'd deem amiss,—conceal'd it lies,  
Safe from the force of wintry skies,  
Till Spring-time from the fostering earth  
Shall wake the meditated birth,  
And June mature, in timely hour,  
The seeds of early Autumn's flower,

B.P. MANT. 1776-1848

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## September 28.

*Late roses in bloom.*

Not spring or summer beauty hath such grace  
As I have seen in one autumnal face.

DONNE. 1573-1631

The rose is fairest when 'tis budding new,  
And hope is brightest when it dawns from fears.

SCOTT. 1771-1832

## September 29.

*St. Michael and All Angels.*

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,  
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun ;  
Conspiring with him how to load and bless  
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run,  
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,  
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core ;  
To swell the gourd and plump the hazel-shells  
With a sweet kernel.

KEATS. 1796-1821

## September 30.

*Wild honeysuckle flowers a second time.*

So doth the woodbine the sweet honeysuckle  
Gently entwist ; the female ivy so  
Enrings the barky fingers of the elm.

SHAKSPERE. *Midsummer Night's Dream*  
Act iv. Sc. i. 1564-1616

But now there fall the latter rains,  
The chills that brown the ferns are come ;  
Southward, above the shivering plains,  
The eddying swallows hasten home.

AUGUSTA WEBSTER

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*How fading are the joys we dote upon !  
Like apparitions seen and gone ;  
But those which soonest take their flight  
Are the most exquisite and strong ;  
Like angels' visits short and bright,  
Mortality's too weak to bear them long.*

JOHN NORRIS. 1657-1711

*—All of these, and all I see,  
Should be sung, and sung by me ;  
They speak their Maker as they can,  
But want and ask the tongue of man.*

THOMAS PARNELL. 1679-1718



## October.

OCTOBER takes its name from two Latin words,—*Octo*, eight, because it was the 8th month of the first Roman year, and *imber*, shower, to point to the wet weather usual at this season.

The Saxons called it *Wyn-Monath*, or wine month, because the grapes were ready for pressing. They also called it *Winter Tylleth*, or coming winter.

The days set apart for special observance in October are the 18th, dedicated to *St. Luke*; the 25th, to *St. Crispin and St. Crispianus*, the patron saints of shoemakers, who while preaching the gospel in France supported themselves by making shoes; the 28th, the joint festivals of *St. Simon and St. Jude*; and the 31st, as the *Eve of All Saints* or *All-hallows Eve*. During this month seed-vessels of many plants may be heard bursting and discharging their contents, many to a considerable distance, other seeds being enclosed in the glowing berries which are devoured and distributed by the birds. October has also a brilliant vegetation of its own in the various fungi, eatable and otherwise.

*Galls* may be observed on oaks, willows, hawthorns, and roses, caused by the ichneumon-fly, which lays its eggs under the bark. Farmers are busy gathering in the root-crops, in ploughing and sowing, while the wood-cutters are at work gathering fuel and felling trees. Wild ducks are caught in decoys, a business which is not permitted to begin till the 1st of October. It is also the great month for brewing, as the weather is cool enough to allow a great quantity of ale to be brewed at a time, without the fear of too rapid fermentation.

### October 1.

*Wild-duck shooting begins ; and pheasant ditto.*

As wild geese that the creeping fowler eye,  
Or russet-pated choughs, many in sort,  
Rising and cawing at the gun's report  
Sever themselves and madly sweep the sky.

SHAKSPERE. *Midsummer Night's Dream*  
Act iii. Sc. 2. 1564-1616

With westlin' winds and slaught'ring guns,  
Comes autumn's pleasant weather :  
The moor-cock-springs, on whirring wings,  
Among the blooming heather.

BURNS. 1759-1796

### October 2.

*Damsons and bullaces ripen.*

The blackcaps, in an orchard met,  
Praising the berries while they ate.—  
The finch that flew her beak to whet  
Before she join'd them on the tree ;  
The water-mouse among the reeds—  
His bright eyes glancing black as beads,  
So happy with a bunch of seeds—  
I felt their gladness heartily.

JEAN INGELOW

### October 3.

*Heaths and stubble fields covered with gossamer.*

TO THE BLACKCOCK.

Good Morrow to thy sable beak,  
And glossy plumage dark and sleek,  
Thy crimson moon and azure eye,  
Cock of the heath, so wildly shy.

I see thee slily cowering through  
That miry web of silver dew  
That twinkles in the morning air  
Like casement of a lady fair.

JOANNA BAILLIE. 1762-1828

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## October 4.

*Oaks and elms in full beauty.*

The monarch Oak, the patriarch of trees,  
Shoots upward well, and spreads by slow degrees ;  
Three centuries he grows, and three he stays  
Supreme in state, and in three more decays.

DRYDEN. 1631-1701

Thou art an elm, my husband, I a vine  
Whose weakness married to thy stronger state  
Makes me with thy strength to communicate.

SHAKSPERE. *Comedy of Errors*, Act ii. Sc. 2  
1564-1616

## October 5.

*Field marigold continues to flower.*

This simple flower, that loves the sun,  
At his departure hangs her head and weeps,  
And shrouds her sweetness up, and keeps  
Sad vigils ; like a cloister'd nun ;  
Till his reviving ray appears,  
Waking her beauty as he dries her tears.

ANON.

They sheath'd their light,  
And, canopied in darkness, sweetly lay,  
Till they might open to adorn the day.

SHAKSPERE. 1564-1616

## October 6.

*St. Faith's day.*

Ever the richest, tenderest glow  
Sets round the autumnal sun—  
But there sight fails ; no heart may know  
The bliss when life is done.

KEBLE. 1792-1856

He, in its case, folds up the tender germ,  
And, ere one flowery season fades and dies,  
Designs the blooming wonders of the next.

COWPER. 1731-1800

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### October 7.

#### *Hedge-crickets sing.*

Where are the songs of spring? Ay, where are they?  
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—  
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn  
Among the river sallows, borne aloft  
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;  
And full-grown lambs bleat loud from hilly bourn;  
Hedge-crickets sing: and now with treble soft  
The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft,  
And gathering swallows twitter in the sky

KEATS. 1796-1820

### October 8.

#### *Ripe acorns fall.*

A shatter'd veteran, hollow-trunk'd, perhaps—  
Thou wast a bauble once; a cup and ball  
Which babes might play with; and the thievish jay  
Seeking her food, with ease might have purloin'd  
The auburn nut that held thee, swallowing down  
Thy yet close-folded latitude of boughs,  
And all thine embryo vastness.

COWPER. (*From the "Yardley Oak."*)  
1731-1800

### October 9.

#### *St. Denys. Curlew calls.*

Not rural sights alone, but rural sounds,  
Exhilarate the spirit, and restore;  
E'en cawing rooks, and kites that scream aloud—  
The jay, the pie, and even the boding owl.  
Sounds inharmonious in themselves and harsh,  
Yet heard in scenes where peace for ever reigns,  
And only there, please highly for their sake.

COWPER. 1731-1800

*The crow doth sing as sweetly as the lark  
When neither is attended.*

SHAKSPERE. *Merchant of Venice, Act v. Sc. 1*  
1564-1616

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## October 10.

*Leaf-buds form under decaying leaves.*

Like leaves on trees the race of man is found,  
Now green in youth, now withering on the ground ;  
Another race the following Spring supplies ;  
They fall successive and successive rise :  
So generations in their course decay !  
So flourish these, when those have pass'd away.

POPE'S *Homer*, Book VI. 1688-1744

## October 11.

*Chickweed seeds.*

Not alone the plant  
Of stately growth and herb of glorious hue,  
Which strike even eyes incurious, but each moss,  
Each shell, each crawling insect, holds a rank  
Important in the plan of Him who framed  
The scale of beings : holds a rank, which, lost,  
Would break the chain, and leave behind a gap  
Which Nature's self would rue.

THOMSON. 1700-1748

## October 12.

*Butterflies disappear.*

Men, like butterflies,  
Show not their mealy wings but to the summer,  
And not a man, for being simply man,  
Hath any honour, but honour for those honours  
That are without him, as place, riches, favour :  
Prizes of accident as oft as merit

SHAKSPERE. *Troilus and Cressida*, Act. iii. Sc.  
1564-1616

*The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the  
way of righteousness.*

*Holy Writ.* Prov. xvi. 31.

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### October 13.

#### *Wood-pigeons return.*

Like as the culver, on the bared bough,  
Sits mourning for the absence of her mate,  
And in her songs sends many a wishful vow  
For his return that seems to linger late,  
So I alone, now left disconsolate,  
Seek with my plaints to match that mournful dove.

SPENSER. 1553-1599

### October 14.

#### *Fairies' pincushions appear on the wild briar.*

The rose looks fair, but fairer we it deem  
For that sweet odour which doth in it live.  
The canker blooms have full as deep a dye  
As the perfumed tincture of the roses,

\* \* \* \* \*

But—for their virtue only is their show,  
They live unwooed and unrespected fade,  
Die to themselves. Sweet roses do not so ;  
Of their sweet deaths are sweetest odours made.

SHAKSPERE. Sonnet liv. 1564-1616

How full of briers is this working-day world.

SHAKSPERE. *As You Like It*, Act i. Sc. 3

### October 15.

#### *Westerly winds prevail.*

Oh wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,  
Thou from whose unseen presence the leaves dead  
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,  
—Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed  
The wingèd seeds, where they lie cold and low,  
Each like a corpse within its grave, until  
*Thine* azure sister of the spring shall blow  
*Her* clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill  
With living hues and odours plain and hill :

SHELLEY. 1792-1822

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### October 16.

*Stillness before a shower. Fieldfare returns.*

Gradual sinks the breeze  
Into a perfect calm ; that not a breath  
Is heard to quiver through the glowing woods,  
Or rustling turn the many-twinkling leaves  
Of aspen tall.

THOMSON. 1700-1748

The faint dying day-hymn stole aloft,  
And not a breath crept through the rosy air—  
And yet the forest leaves seem'd stirr'd to prayer.

BYRON. 1788-1824

### October 17.

*Thistledown floats. St. Etheldreda.*

Seeds with wings, between earth and sky  
Fluttering, flying :—

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Where winds drop them there must they lie,  
Living or dying.

AUGUSTA WEBSTER.

To mark the wondrous workings of the Power  
That shuts within the seed the future flower.

W. COWPER. 1731-1800

### October 18.

*St. Luke's day.*

—Like those days of later autumn-tide,  
When he who in some town may chance to bide  
Opens the window for the balmy air,  
And seeing the golden hazy sky so fair,  
And from some city-garden hearing still  
The wheeling rooks the air with music fill,  
Sweet hopeful music, thinketh. Is this spring,  
Surely the year can scarce be perishing ?—

—In such St. Luke's short summer lived these men  
Nearing the goal of threescore years and ten.

Wm. MOR.

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## October 19.

*Second day of "St. Luke's little summer."*

This guest of Summer,  
The temple-haunting martlet, doth approve  
By his loved mansionry that the heaven's breath  
Smells wooingly here ; no jutting, frieze, or buttress,  
Nor coign of vantage, but this bird hath made  
His pendent bed, and procreant cradle :—Where they  
Most breed and haunt, I have observed, the air  
Is delicate.

SHAKSPERE. *Macbeth*, Act i. Sc. 1  
1564-1616

## October 20.

*Second blossoming of primroses on sheltered banks.*

It was a day that sent into the heart  
A summer feeling : even the insect swarms  
From their dark nooks and coverts issued forth,  
To sport through one day of existence more ;  
The solitary primrose on the bank  
Seem'd as though now it had no cause to mourn  
Its bleak autumnal birth, while it partook  
The universal blessing.

SOUTHEY. 1774-1843

## October 21.

*The redbreast sings.*

This were an apt confessional for one  
Taught by his summer spent his autumn gone  
That life is but a tale of morning grass  
Withered at eve ! Thrice happy guest,  
If from a golden perch of aspen spray  
(October's workmanship to rival May),  
The pensive warbler of the ruddy breast  
That moral sweeten, by a heaven-taught lay,  
Lulling the year with all its cares to rest.

W. WORDSWORTH. 1770-1855

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## October 22.

*Crab-apples ripen.*

For I have loved the rural walk through lanes,  
E'er since, a truant boy, I pass'd my bounds,  
And fed on scarlet hips and stony haws,  
Or blushing crabs, or berries that emboss  
The bramble, black as jet,—or sloes austere.

COWPER. 1731-1800

Two lovely berries, moulded on one stem.

SHAKSPERE. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*  
Act iii. Sc. 2. 1564-1616

## October 23.

*Snipe arrive.*

—Withal there came unto our need  
Woodcock and snipe when swallows go :  
And now the water-hen flies low  
With feet that well-nigh touch the reeds,  
And plovers cry about the meads,  
And the stares chatter ; certes, sir,  
It is a fair place all the year.

WM. MORRIS.

## October 24.

*Filberts ripen.*

See there a nimble squirrel from the wood  
Ranging the hedges for his filbert food,  
Sits partly on a bough his browne nuts cracking,  
And from the shell the sweet white kernell taking ;  
Till, with their crookes and bags, a sort of boyes,  
(To share with him) come with so great a noyse,  
That he is forced to leave a nut nigh broke  
And for his life leap to a neighbour oake.

WILLIAM BROWNE. 1590-1645

Sweetest nut hath sourest rind.

SHAKSPERE. *As You Like It*, Act iii. Sc.  
1564-1616

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### October 25.

*St. Crispin—Martyr.*

Sweeter than all roses, sights of birds,  
Richer than fruit, more than whole lands of corn,  
Fairer than glories of the brightest day,  
Dearer than any old familiar sound  
Of childhood's hours, than every glittering joy  
Thrown from the teeming fountain of the earth,  
Is our impulsive answer to the call of duty.

T. WOOLNER.

### October 26.

*Rooks return to their nest-trees.*

A shatter'd veteran, hollow-trunk'd, perhaps.

COWPER. 1731-1800

For it so falls out  
That what we have we prize not to the worth  
Whiles we enjoy it ; but, being lack'd and lost  
Why then we reck the value ; then we find  
The virtue, that possession would not show us  
Whiles it was ours.

SHAKSPERE. *Much Ado About Nothing*  
Act iv. Sc. i. 1564-1616

### October 27.

*Maple trees golden.*

If we could open and unbind our eye,  
We all, like Moses, should espy,  
E'en in a bush, the radiant Deity.

We disregard these his inferior ways,  
(Tho' no less full of miracle and praise :)  
Upon the flowers of heaven we wondering gaze,  
The stars of earth no wonder in us raise ;—  
— Yet these, perhaps, do more than they  
*The human lives about us sway.*

COWLEY. 1618-1667

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### October 28.

*St. Simon and St. Jude. Autumn tints deepen.*

Though our barns are fill'd with plenty,  
Wine and oil, and golden sheaves,  
Every heart hath its own burden,  
Every life its autumn leaves.

ANON.

Oh God, Who madest earth, sea, air,  
And living creatures free and fair,  
Thy hallow'd praise sounds everywhere.  
Yea, woods and winds and waves convey  
To the rapt ear their hymn and say  
The Power that taught us, we obey.  
Hallelujah!

JOANNA BAILLIE. 1762-1851

### October 29.

*Fungi spring up, in great numbers*

Poor fungi of a day—

On trunks of greatness ! To our graves we walk  
In the thick footprints of departed men.

ALEX. SMITH. 1830-1867

By the rose-flesh mushrooms,—undivulged  
Last evening—nay, in to-day's first dew  
Yon sudden coral nipple bulged ;  
Where a freak'd, fawn-colour'd, flaky crew  
Of toad-stools peep indulged.

ROBT. BROWNING.

### October 30.

*Mignonette scatters its seeds.*

We'll count by joys our days on earth,  
By flowers of spring and summer meads,  
By winters rich in Christmas mirth,  
And autumns strewing golden seeds.

The suns which dim in tears arose

We need not chronicle, I trow ;

*The memory of departed woes*

We cannot, if we would, forego.

*From "The After-glow."*

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October 31.

*Eve of All Saints—or All Hallowe Eve.*

And is there care in Heaven ? And is there love  
In heavenly spirits to the creatures base,  
That may compassion of their evils move ?  
There is :—the much more wretched were the case  
Of men than beasts : but O ! the exceeding grace  
Of highest God, that loves his creatures so,  
And all his works with mercy doth embrace,  
That blessed angels he sends to and fro,  
To serve to wicked man—to serve his foe !

How oft do they their silver bowers leave  
To come to succour us that succour want !  
How oft do they with golden pinions cleave  
The flitting skies, like flying purviant,  
Against foul fiends to aid us militant !  
They for us fight, they watch and duly ward,  
And their bright squadrons round about us plant ;  
And all for love and nothing for reward :  
O, why should heavenly God to men have such regard ?

EDMUND SPENSER. 1553-1599

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*Red o'er the forest peers the setting sun,  
The line of yellow light dies fast away  
That crown'd the eastern copse : and chill and dun  
Falls on the moor the brief November day.*

*Now the tired hunter winds a parting note,  
And Echo bids good-night from every glade ;  
Yet wait awhile and see the calm leaves float  
Each to his rest beneath their parent shade.*

*How like decaying life they seem to glide !  
And yet no second Spring have they in store,  
But where they fall forgotten to abide  
Is all their portion, and they ask no more.*

*Soon o'er their heads blithe April airs shall sing,  
A thousand wild-flowers round them shall unfold,  
The green buds glisten in the dews of Spring,  
And all be vernal rapture as of old.*

*KEBLE. 1792-1866*



## November.

THE eleventh month of our year still retains the name the Romans gave it when it was the *ninth*, from the Latin word *novem* nine. Our Saxon forefathers called it *Wind-Monat*, or wind-month, from its stormy character, and afterwards *Blot-Monath*, or blood month, because so many cows, sheep, and pigs were killed to be salted for winter use. The 1st day of this month has been observed as the feast of *All Saints* ever since the Christians took possession of the Roman Pantheon in 607 and dedicated it to the *Virgin and all the Saints* instead of to all the heathen gods. The 11th is called *St. Martin's day*, in memory of a very eminent Christian bishop of Tours, and was first appointed as a holiday in A.D. 650. The 30th is the day of *St. Andrew*, disciple of our Lord, whose exertions in spreading the Gospel in Scythia caused him to be scourged and crucified by the Roman governor. When the Emperor Constantine became a Christian he had his body embalmed and buried magnificently. His bones are said to have been removed to Scotland in the fourth century, when the church of St. Andrew was built over them. Our Church's year is regulated by the festival of St. Andrew, Advent Sunday being always the Sunday nearest that day.

Very few insects or animals can be seen abroad in November, being either dead or housed in their winter abodes. Cattle and sheep are also generally housed or folded. Fish are busy seeking shallow pools for spawning. The stock-dove, our latest winter visitor, makes its appearance from the north, and feeds on the beech-mast in our woods, where the brilliant autumn leaves are just ceasing to fall. Fungi still adorn their roots, and a few blossoms linger in sheltered places, while the farmer hastens to finish the necessary ploughing, sowing, and draining, ere he lays aside his implements till the return of spring.

The eave-swallow may be seen as late as the 16th November, and is commonly called the house-martin—martlet by Shakspere,—in memory of St Martin, whose festival is on the 11th November.

### **November 1.**

*All Saints' day.*

Die to the root, sweet flower,  
 If so God wills, die even to the root ;  
 Live there awhile, an uncomplaining mute,  
 Blank life, with darkness wrapp'd about thy head,  
 And fear not for the silence round thee spread.  
 This is no grave, though thou among the dead  
 Art counted,—but the Hiding-place of Power.

Die to the root, sweet flower.

DORA GREENWELL.

In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die.

*Book of Wisdom*, iii. 2.

### **November 2.**

*Westerly winds prevail.*

Oh wild west wind ! thou breath of Autumn's being !  
 . . . Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is ;  
 What if my leaves are falling, like its own ?  
 The tumult of thy mighty harmonies  
 Will take from both a deep autumnal tone ;  
 The trumpet of a prophecy ! O wind,  
 If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind ?

SHELLEY. 1792-1822

### **November 3.**

*Chestnuts fall.*

Oh ! the sense of the yellow mountain-flowers  
 And thorny balls, each three in one,  
 The chestnuts throw on our path in showers !  
 For the drop of the woodland fruit's begun  
 These early November hours.

ROBT. BROWNING.

*The yellow moss, in scaly rings  
 Creeps round the hawthorn's prickly bough.*

LEYDEN. 1775-1811

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### **November 4.**

*Salmon and other fish force their way up stream, to spawn.*

By viewing Nature, Nature's handmaid art  
Makes mighty things from small beginnings grow;  
Thus fishes first to shipping did impart  
Their tail, the rudder, and their head the prow.

DRYDEN. 1631-1701

Learn of the little nautilus to sail,  
Spread the thin oar, and catch the driving gale.

POPE. 1688-1744

In-contemplation of created things  
By steps we may ascend to God.

MILTON. 1608-1674

### **November 5.**

*Guy Fawkes day. Morning mists.*

Ring bells aloud : burn bonfires, clear and bright.

SHAKSPERE. *Henry VI.*, Act v. Sc 7.

The woodman winding eastward up the glen  
At wintry dawn, where o'er the sheep-track's maze  
The viewless snow-mist weaves a glistening haze,  
Sees full before him, gliding without tread,  
An image with a glory round its head ;  
The enamour'd rustic worships its fair hues,  
Nor knows he makes the image he pursues.

COLERIDGE. 1772-1834

### **November 6.**

*North wind blows.*

Are not these woods  
More free from peril than the envious court ?  
Here feel we but the penalty of Adam,  
The season's difference, as the icy fang  
And churlish chiding of the winter's wind,  
Which when it bites and blows upon my body  
Even till I shrink with cold, I smile and say,  
*This is no flattery* : these are counsellors  
*That feelingly persuade me what I am.*

SHAKSPERE. *As You Like It*, Act ii. Sc 1  
1564-1616

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### November 7.

*Poplar leaves fall.*

That time of year thou may'st in me behold  
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang  
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,  
Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.  
\* \* \* \* \*

This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong,  
To love that well, which thou must leave ere long.

SHAKSPERE. *Sonnet lxxiii.* 1564-1616

### November 8.

*Crimson leaves of Virginian creeper fall.*

These early November hours  
That crimson the creeper's leaf across  
Like a splash of blood intense, abrupt,  
O'er a shield, else gold from rim to boss,  
And lay it for shew on the fairy-cupp'd  
Elf-needled mat of moss.

ROBERT BROWNING.

The seasons alter ; hoary-headed frosts  
Fall in the fresh lap of the crimson rose.

SHAKSPERE. *Midsummer Night's Dream,*  
Act ii. Sc. 2. 1564-1616.

### November 9.

*Green whistling plover appears.*

Birds—through the wastes of the trackless air  
Ye have a guide, and shall we despair ?  
Ye over desert and deep have pass'd,  
So shall we reach our bright home at last.

FELICIA HEMANS. 1794-1835

Wonderful indeed are all His works,  
Pleasant to know, and worthiest to be all  
*Had in remembrance, always with delight.*

MILTON. 1608-1674

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### **November 10.**

*St. Martin's Eve. Hepatica flowers.*

As on a mountain-top the cedar shows  
That keeps his leaves in spite of any storm.

*K. Henry VI., Act v. Sc. 1.*

The weary sun hath made a golden set,  
And, by the bright track of his fiery car,  
Gives signal of a goodly day to-morrow.

*King Richard III., Act v. Sc. 3.*

See how the morning opes her golden gates,  
And takes her farewell of the glorious sun !  
How well resembles it the prime of youth.

*SHAKSPERE. 3rd part of K. Henry VI.  
Act. ii. Sc. 1. 1564-1616*

### **November 11.**

*St. Martin's day. Rose-martin still lingers.*

*Short and sweet, like a martinmas summer.*

*Old Saying.*

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day ?  
Thou art more lovely, and more temperate.

*SHAKSPERE. Sonnet xviii. 1564-1616*

The rainbow issues from her cloudy shrine,  
And arching down to kiss, with kisses sweet,  
The little world that brightens at her feet,  
Runs liquid through her many hues divine.

*ROBERT BUCHANAN.*

### **November 12.**

*Mahomedan New year's day.*

I look along the dusty, dreary way,  
So lately strew'd with blossoms fresh and gay,—  
The sweet procession of the year is past,  
And wither'd whirling leaves run rattling fast,  
Like throngs of tatter'd beggars following  
Where late went by the pageant of a king.

*FRANCES ANNE KEMBLE.*

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The saddest birds a season find to sing,  
The roughest storm a calm may soon allay ;  
Thus with succeeding turns God tempereth all,  
That man may hope to rise, yet fear to fall.

SOUTHWE

November 14.

*Leaves fall green from the apple trees.*

Like winds that in the crimson autumn eves  
Pipe of the winter snow, my prescient thoughts  
Are touch'd with sadness. Ay, the leaf must fa  
And rot in the long rain.  
Death weaves the subtle mystery of joy :  
He gives a trembling preciousness to love ;  
The summer light is sweeter for his shade.

ALEX. SMITH. 1830-1

November 15.

*Fogs and mists frequent.*

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### November 16.

*Fieldfares return with November frosts.*

Sing on, sweet thrush, upon the leafless bough ;

Sing on, sweet bird, I listen to thy strain ;

And aged Winter, 'mid his early reign,

At thy blythe carol cheers his furrow'd brow.

BURNS.

*When lofty trees I see barren of leaves*

*Which east from heat did canopy the herd*

*And Summer's green all girded up in sheaves.*

SHAKSPEARE. *Sonnet xii.* 1564-161

### November 17.

*Earthworms come out on mild rainy nights.*

The southern wind

Doth play the trumpet to his purposes,

And by his hollow whistling in the leaves

Foretells a tempest, and a blustering day.

SHAKSPERE. *3rd part of K. Henry IV*

*Act v. Sc. i.*

How bountiful these elements, compared

With aught, as more desirable and fair,

Devised by fancy for the golden age.

Or the perpetual warbling that prevails

In Arcady beneath unalter'd skies.

WORDSWORTH. 1770-1850

### November 18.

*Hips, haws, and honeysuckle-berries adorn the hedges.*

Red is the berry, O Rose ! on thy bushes,

Harsh is its inside, though fairly it blushes ;

So, World, dost thou lure us, and mock us with lies :

Outside thy seeming is gracious and sunny,

Outside thy greetings are sweet as the honey,

Bitter thy kernel : O man, then be wise !

*By a monk of the xvth century.*

Thou crownest the year with Thy goodness.

*Psalms of David, lxx. vii.*

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Among  
Of blank astoun—  
But 'tis endued with pow’r—  
And sanctify one closing day,  
That frail mortality may see—  
What is?—ah no, but what can be!  
Come forth, ye drooping old man, look around,  
And see to what fair countries ye are bound.  
WORDSWORTH. 1770-1850

### November 20.

*Elms shed their leaves.*

The elm lets fall its leaves before the frost,  
The very oak grows shivering and sere,  
The trees are barren when the summer's lost  
But one tree keeps its goodness all the year.  
Green pine, unchanging as the days go by,  
Thou art thyself, beneath whatever sky.

AUGUSTA WEBSTER  
*Psalms of David, liv. 1*

The trees of the Lord also are full of sap:  
Even the cedars of Libanus which he hath planted

### November 21.

*Greenfinches flock.*

The mellow year is hastening to its close,  
The little birds have almost sung their last,  
Their small notes twitter in the dreary blast,  
That shrill-piped harbinger of early snows  
The patient beauty of the scentless rose,  
Oft with the morn's hoar crystal quaintly  
Hangs, a pale mourner for the summer past,  
And makes a little summer where it grows.

HARTLEY COLERIDGE.

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### **November 22.**

*St. Cecilia's day.*

The wind is now thy organist.

WORDSWORTH. 1770-1850

In winter, when the dismal rain  
Came down in slanting lines,  
And wind, that grand old harper, smote  
His thunder-harp of pines.

ALEX SMITH. 1830-1867

Fast by a grove of firs,  
Whose thread-like leaves to the low-breathing gale  
Made a soft sound, most like the distant ocean.

COLERIDGE. 1772-1834

### **November 23.**

*St. Clement. Rose-tinted fruits on spindle-trees.*

To you the beauties of the autumnal year  
Make mournful emblems, and you think of man  
Doom'd to the grave's long winter, spirit-broke,  
Bending beneath the burden of his years,  
Yet clinging still to life. To me they show  
The calm decay of nature, when the mind  
Retains its strength, and in the languid eye  
Religion's holy hopes kindle a joy  
That makes old age look lovely.

SOUTHEY. 1774-1843

### **November 24.**

*Blossoms on the gorse.*

Mountain gorses, since Linnæus  
Knelt beside you on the sod,  
For your beauty thanking God,  
Do ye teach us to be glad  
When no summer can be had?  
Ye whom God preserveth still  
Set as lights upon a hill,  
Tokens to the wintry Earth that Beauty liveth still

E. B. BROWNING. 1801-1861

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### **November 25.**

*St. Catherine's day.*

When the hours flew brightly by  
And not a cloud obscured the sky,

Thy grace did guide to Thee :  
Now, when storms and clouds o'ercast  
Darkly my present and my past,  
Let my Future radiant be, with thought of Thee.

E. B. BROWNING. 1809-1861

Be foul or fair, be rain or shine,  
The joys I have possess'd are mine.

DRYDEN. 1636-1700

### **November 26.**

*Sheep driven to sheltered spots.*

November's sky is chill and drear,  
November's leaf is red and sere.  
The sheep beneath the lowering heaven,  
To shelter'd dale and down are driven,  
Where yet some faded herbage pines,  
And yet a watery sunbeam shines :  
In meek despondency they eye  
The wither'd sward and wintry sky.

SCOTT. 1771-1832

### **November 27.**

*The tortoise begins to bury himself.*

I have lived long enough—my way of life  
Is fallen into the sere and yellow leaf.

SHAKSPERE. *Macbeth*, Act v. Sc. 3  
1564-1616

On a clear eve, when the November sky  
Grew red with promise of the hoar-frost nigh,  
These ancient men turn'd from the outside cold  
With something like content that they, grown old,  
Needed but little now to help the ease  
*Of those last days before the final peace.*

W. MORRIS.

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### November 28.

#### *Holly-berries crimson.*

Cold grew the foggy morn, the day was brief,  
Loose on the cherry hung the crimson leaf :  
The dew dwelt ever on the herb ; the woods  
Roar'd with strong blasts, with mighty showers the floods :  
All green was vanish'd save of pine and yew,  
That still display'd their melancholy hue ;  
Save the green holly, with its berries red,  
And the green moss that o'er the gravel spread.

CRABBE. 1754-1832

### November 29.

#### *Daisies blossom here and there.*

Wee, modest, crimson-tipp'd flower,  
Thou'st met me in an evil hour,—  
To spare thee now is past my power.

BURNS. (*To a Daisy crushed by the Ploughshare.*)  
1759-1796

Myriads of daisies have shone forth in flower  
Near the lark's nest, and in their natural hour  
Have pass'd away ; less happy than the one  
That, by the unwilling ploughshare, died to prove  
The tender charm of poetry and love.

WORDSWORTH. 1770-1850

The littel daizie that at even closes.

SPENSER. 1533-1599

### November 30.

#### *Ivy clothes the bare branches.*

To the wild woods and the plains,  
To the pools, where winter rains  
Image all their roof of leaves—  
Where the pine its garland weaves  
Of sapless green, and ivy dun,  
Round stems that never kiss the sun :  
Where the melting hoar-frost wets  
The daisy-star that never sets.

SHELLEY. 1792-1822

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*TO MEADOWS IN WINTER.*

*Ye have been fresh and green,  
Ye have been fill'd with flowers ;  
And ye the walks have been  
Where maids have spent their hours.*

*You have beheld how they  
With wicker arks did come,  
To kiss and bear away  
The richer cowslips home.*

*You've heard them sweetly sing,  
And seen them in a round ;  
Each virgin, like a spring,  
With honeysuckles crown'd.*

*ROBERT HERRICK. 1594-1674*

*How small a part of Time they share  
That are so wondrous sweet and fair !*

*EDMUND WALLER. 1605-1687*



## December.

THIS last month in our year, was, as its name indicates, (*decem* ten), the tenth in the early calendar of the Romans, the month in which they celebrated their *Saturnalia*, or games in honour of Vesta, their goddess of purity. Among the ancient Britons the Druids at this season held the feast of *Yol*, whence our word *Yule*. Our Saxon forefathers called December *Winter-Monat*, and after their conversion to Christianity *Heilig-Monath*, or Holy Month, on account of the Nativity of our Lord. The 21st day is the Winter Solstice, the shortest day in the year, being only 7 hours, 44 minutes, and 17 seconds from sunrise to sunset. The 25th, our *Christmas-day*, so named from the Latin *Christi Missa*, or the *Mass of Christ*, has been the principal Christian festival from very early times. In the 4th century it was customary to date any remarkable event from the *Nativity*, or the *Incarnation*, instead of from the *building of Rome* as heretofore. The 27th is *St. John's day*; and the 28th has been devoted from a very early period to the memory of the *Holy Innocents* who perished by order of Herod at the time of our Saviour's Birth.

This is the first month of Winter, the period of rest for roots and plants, in which to strengthen and prepare themselves for the active life of the ensuing season. The farmer has little to do out of doors but to burn the weeds and attend to the domestic cattle. Sheep, which are generally left out, must be constantly tended. Hybernating animals become torpid, while squirrels, mice, and water-rats live on the stores they have accumulated in autumn. The last blossoms of the year disappear, but in mild seasons a snowdrop here and there hangs out its silver bell, as if eager for the spring. The short days are dark and dreary, as that part of the earth on which we dwell turns away from the slanting rays of the sun in 6 or 8 hours. Indeed, as a source of light alone, the whiteness of the snow, which depends on the minute subdivision of its crystals, becomes very welcome, as well as for the sheltering coverlet it supplies to the roots, which are awaiting the return of "Spring, the year's youth, the mother of new flowers." Christmas is rightly a time of increased liberality to the poor and needy.

### **December 1.**

*Frost becomes severe.*

Thus often has the brightest day a cloud,  
And after Summer evermore succeeds  
Barren Winter, with his wrathful nipping cold.  
So cares and joys abound as seasons fleet.

SHAKSPERE. *2nd Part of K. Henry VI.,*  
Act ii. Sc. 4. 1564-1616

Man is the noblest growth our realms supply,  
And souls are ripe and 'neath our northern sky.

MRS. BARBAULD. 1743-1825

### **December 2.**

*Snow falls.*

The white, cold virgin snow.

SHAKSPERE. *The Tempest, Act. iv. Sc. 1,*  
1564-1616

The rain and wind beat dark December, how  
Shall we discourse the freezing hours away?

Ibid. *As You Like It, Act ii. Sc. 3.*

For me the leaf was green upon the bough  
The livelong year, my tall ferns never sank,  
Some sweet and tender blossom always grew,  
The summer and the winter skies were blue ;  
And when the snow came in a winter freak  
To make the blossoms play me Hide-and-Seek  
I laughed, because I knew that they were there.

AUGUSTA WEBSTER.

### **December 3.**

*Silence in the woods.*

Lastly came Winter cloth'd all in frieze ;  
Chattering his teeth for cold that did him chill,  
Whilst on his hoary beard his breath did freeze  
In his right hand a tipped staff he held,  
With which his feeble limbs he stayed still,  
For he was faint with cold, and weak with eld.

SPENSER. 1533-1599

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## December 4.

*Crickets chirp, on the hearth.*

The poetry of earth is ceasing never ;—  
On a lone winter-evening, when the frost  
Has wrought a silence, from the stove there shrills  
The Cricket's song, in warmth, increasing ever,  
And seems to one, in drowsiness half lost,  
The Grasshopper's among some grassy hills.

KEATS. 1796-1821

## December 5.

*The robin becomes familiar.*

The redbreast pays to trusted man  
His annual visit. Half afraid, he first  
Against the window beats ; then, brisk, alights  
On the warm hearth ; then hopping o'er the floor,  
Eyes all the smiling family askance,  
And pecks, and starts, and wonders where he is ;  
Till, more familiar grown, the table crumbs  
Attract his slender feet.

COWPER. 1731-1800

## December 6.

*S. Nicholas' day.*

Here see blithe looks, fresh cheeks, beguile  
Old age, here see December smile !  
Here see a nest of roses grow  
In a bed of reverend snow.  
Warm thoughts, free spirits, flattering  
Winter's self into a Spring !  
A man whose sober soul can tell  
How to wear her garments well.  
RICHARD CRASHAW. Circa 1616-1650

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## December 7.

*Vegetation at a stand-still.*

The heart must have its Autumn, its pale skies,  
Leading, mayhap, to Winter's dim dismay.  
Yet doubt not. Beauty doth not pass away!  
Secure beneath the earth the Snowdrop lies,  
Waiting the Spring's young resurrection-day.  
Through the kind nurture of the Winter cold  
Thy Sorrow is the husk that doth enfold  
A gorgeous June.

GEORGE MACDONALD.

## December 8.

*Hoar-frosts silver the branches.*

Though I be hoar, I fare as doth a tree  
That blosmeth ere the fruit y-waxen be;  
The blosmy tree is neither drie nor ded;  
I feel me nowhere hoar but on my hed;  
Mine harte and all my limmès ben as green  
As laurel through the year is for to seen.

CHAUCER. 1328-1400

## December 9.

*Leafless mezereon in flower.*

To me fair memories belong  
Of scenes that used to bless,  
For no regret, but present song,  
And lasting thankfulness,  
And very soon to break away,  
Like types, in purer things than they.

I will have hopes that cannot fade  
For flowers the valley yields,  
I will have humble thoughts instead  
Of silent dewy fields.

My spirit and my God shall be  
My seaward hill, my boundless sea.

E. B. BROWNING. 1809-1881

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### December 10.

*Roots for fodder safe under the earth.*

"He giveth snow like wool."

*Psalms of David, cxlvii. 16.*

Altho' on hoary twigs no buds peep out,  
And e'en the hardy bramble cease to sprout,  
Beneath dread Winter's level sheets of snow  
The sweet nutritious turnip still will grow.

ROBT. BLOOMFIELD. 1766-1823

Though boundless snows the withered heath deform  
And the dim sun scarce wanders through the storm,  
Yet shall the smile of social love repay  
With mental light the melancholy day.

CРАBBЕ.

### December 11.

*Lichens spread.*

Though now no more the musing ear  
    Delights to listen to the breeze  
That lingers o'er the greenwood shade,  
    I love thee, Winter, well.

I see the spangled branches shine,  
    And mark the moss of many a hue,  
That varies the old trees' brown bark,  
    Or o'er the gray stone spreads.

SOUTHEY. 1774-1843

### December 12.

*Moles are at work casting up hillocks.*

There are four seasons in the mind of man :  
He has his lusty Spring, when fancy clear  
Takes in all beauty with an easy span :  
He has his Summer, when luxuriously  
Spring's honey'd cud of youthful thought he loves  
To ruminate . . . . quiet coves  
His soul has in its Autumn . . . .  
He has his Winter too, of pale misfeature,  
Or else he would forget his mortal nature.

KRATS. 1796-1821

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### December 13.

*Cattle housed.*

Though night approaching bids for rest prepare,  
Still the flail echoes through the frosty air ;  
Nor stops till deepest shades of darkness come,  
Sending at length the weary labourer home.  
By him with bed and nightly food supplied,  
Throughout the yard, housed round on every side,  
Deep-plunging cows their rustling feast enjoy,  
And snatch sweet mouthfuls from the passing boy,  
Who moves unseen beneath his trailing load,  
Fills the tall racks, and leaves a scatter'd road.

BLOOMFIELD. 1766-1823

### December 14.

*Robins sing softly.*

Now, where the woods fence off the northern blast,  
The redbreast warbles still, but is content  
With slender notes and more than half suppress'd.  
Where'er he rests, he shakes, from spray to spray,  
From many a twig, the pendent drops of ice  
That tinkle in the wither'd leaves below.

COWPER. 1731-1800

### December 15.

*Daisies still in flower, here and there.*

There is a flower, a little flower,  
With silver crest and golden eye,  
That welcomes every changing hour,  
And weathers every sky.  
It smiles upon the lap of May,  
To sultry August lends its charms,  
Lights pale November on its way,  
And twines December's arms.

MONTGOMERY. 1771-1854

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## December 16.

*Trees are felled.*

Forth goes the woodman, leaving unconcern'd  
The cheerful haunts of man, to wield the axe.  
Shaggy, and lean, and shrewd, with pointed ears,  
His dog attends him. Close behind his heel  
Now creeps he slow ; and now, with many a frisk  
Wide-scampering, snatches up the drifted snow  
With ivory teeth, or ploughs it with his snout ;  
Then shakes his powder'd coat, and barks for joy.

COWPER. 1731-1800

## December 17.

*Branches bare in the woods.*

INSENSIBILITY OF NATURE.

In a drear-nighted December,  
Too happy, happy, tree,  
Thy branches ne'er remember  
Their green felicity.  
The north cannot undo them  
With a sleety whistle through them,  
Nor frozen thawings glue them  
From budding at the prime.

KEATS. 1796-1821

## December 18.

*Holly-berries ripen.*

Above, the Holly decks the scene,  
With prickly leaves of glossy green,  
And girt with balls of scarlet dye,—  
Boon Nature's provident supply  
Of banquets for the eager bird  
Save when to village church transferr'd  
It lends symbolic colours gay  
To grace the Christian holiday.  
B.P. MANT. 1776-1845

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Now I behold white sepulchres,  
As well as the white rose. . . .  
But graver, meeker thoughts are given,  
And I have learn'd to lift my face,  
Reminded how Earth's greenest place  
Its brightness draws from Heaven.

E. B. BROWNING. 1809-11

### December 20.

*Farming operations suspended. Weeds burnea*  
'Twixt ridge and hollow by November seared  
Bare was the country-side of work and folk :  
The smouldering weed-heap by the garden b  
Side-long the plough beside the field-gate lay,  
With no one nigh to scare the birds away,  
That twitter'd mid the scanty wisps of straw ;  
So round the fire the ancient folk did draw.

W. MORF

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### December 22.

*Holly and Ivy adorn bare woods and ruins.*

In the rock's gloomy crevice the bright Holly grows,  
And Ivy waves fresh o'er the withering Rose—  
So the evergreen love of a true-hearted wife  
Smooths the roughness of care—cheers the winter of life.

REV. J. MARRIOTT.

Time's wing but seem'd in stealing o'er  
To leave her lovelier than before.

MOORE. 1799-1852

His leaf also shall not wither.

*Book of Psalms, i. 3.*

### December 23.

*Mistletoe gathered.*

Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes  
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,  
The bird of dawning singeth all night long.

SHAKSPERE. *Hamlet*, Act i. Sc. 4.  
1564-1616

Then is there mirth in heaven,  
When earthly things, made even,  
Atone together.

Ibid. *As You Like It*, Act v. Sc. 4.

### December 24.

*Christmas-eve. Roomis decked with holly.*

The hall was dress'd with holly green,  
The damsel donn'd her kirtle sheen ;  
Power laid his rod of rule aside,  
And ceremony doff'd his pride.  
The heir with roses in his shoes,  
That night might village-partner choose ;  
All hail'd, with uncontroll'd delight  
And general voice, the happy night  
That to the cottage, as the crown,  
Brought tidings of salvation down.

WALTER SCOTT. 1771-1832

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### December 25.

*Christmas day,*

It was the winter wild  
While the heaven-born child

All meanly wrapt in the rude manger lies ;  
Nature, in awe of him,  
Had doff'd her gaudy trim,  
With her great Master so to sympathize.

MILTON. 1608-1674

At Christmas I no more desire a rose  
Than wish for snow in May's new-fangled shows ;  
But like of each thing that in season grows.

SHAKSPERE. *Love's Labour's Lost*, Act i. Sc. 1  
1564-1616

### December 26.

*St. Stephen's day. Carol singing.*

Rough wind, that moanest loud  
Grief too sad for song ;—  
Sad storm whose tears are vain,  
Bare woods whose branches stain,—  
Wail for the world's wrong !

SHELLEY. 1792-1822

That learning springs from a poor root  
Which all the winter sleeps here underfoot,  
And hath no wings  
To raise it to the truth and light of things !  
All will ere long  
Come forth most fair and young.

HENRY VAUGHAN. 1621-1695

### December 27.

*St. John the Evangelist's day.*

When Christmas revels in a world of snow,  
And bids her berries blush, her carols flow,  
*His* spangling shower when Frost, the wizard, flings  
*Or*, borne in ether blue, on viewless wings,  
*O'er* the white pane his silvery foliage weaves,  
*And* gems with icicles the sheltering eaves.

ROGERS. 1763-185

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### December 28.

*Innocents' day.*

To make a happy fireside clime,  
For weans and wife,—  
That's the true pathos and sublime  
Of human life.

BURNS. 1759-1796

When round yon ample board, in due degree,  
We sweeten'd every meal with social glee,  
The heart's light laugh pursued the circling jest,  
And all was sunshine in each little breast.  
'Twas here we chased the slipper by its sound,  
And turn'd the blindsold hero round and round.

SAMUEL ROGERS. 1763-1855

### December 29.

*Feasting in olden times.*

The fire, with well-dried logs supplied,  
Went roaring up the chimney wide ;  
The huge hall-table's oaken face—  
—Scrubb'd till it shone the day to grace—  
Bore then upon its massive board,  
No mark to part the squire and lord.  
Then the grim boar's head frown'd on high  
Crested with bays and rosemary.

SCOTT. 1771-1832

### December 30.

*Fragrant wallflower (*Cheiranthus*) still flowers.*

A mirthful man was he—the snows of age  
Fell, but they did not chill his gaiety  
Even in life's closing, touch'd his teeming brain  
With such bright visions as the setting sun  
Raises in front of some hoar glacier,  
Painting the bleak ice with a thousand hues.

SCOTT. 1771-1832

Whose beard the silver hand of peace hath touched.

SHAKSPEARE. 2nd Part of K. Henry IV.,  
Act iv. Sc. i. 1564-1616

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**December 31.**

*New Year's eve. St. Sylvester, Bp.*

*Timber is lopped and fences repaired.*

While hisses on my hearth the pulpy pear,  
And blackening chestnuts start and crackle there.

MILTON. 1608-1674

The lopped tree in time may grow again,  
Most naked plants renew both fruit and flower,  
The sorriest wight may find release of pain,  
The driest soil suck in some moistening shower ;  
No joy so great but runneth to an end,  
No hap so hard but may in time amend.

SOUTHWELL. 1560-1595

Orphan hours, the year is dead ;  
Come and sigh, come and weep !  
Merry hours, smile instead,  
For the year is but asleep :  
See, it smiles as it is sleeping,  
Mocking your untimely weeping.

January grey comes here,  
Like a sexton by her grave,—  
February bears the bier,  
March with grief doth howl and rave,  
And April weeps,—but, O ye hours !  
Follow with May's fairest flowers !

P. B. SHELLEY. 1792-1822

IN SESE VERTITUR ANNUS.





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*FINIS.*

*Life glides away, Lorenzo ! like a brook,  
Forever changing, unperceived the change ;  
In the same brook none ever bathed him twice.  
To the same life none ever twice awoke.*

*We call the brook the same ; the same we think  
Our life, though still more rapid in its flow.*

YOUNG. 1681-1765

*Thou renewest the face of the earth.*

Psalms of David, civ. 30.

*The inward man is renewed day by day.*

Epistles of St. Paul, 2 Cor. iv. 16.



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